





BULGARIA —  
LAND OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS



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Bulgaria is a land of ancient civilizations. The country takes up the larger part of the Balkan Peninsula's eastern half, the easternmost of Europe's southern peninsulas. There are high mountains in the peninsula here, the seemingly endless chain of the Balkan Range, the Rila-Rhodope massif, with its snow-capped peaks, and rich mineral deposits; there are spacious shores here too, those of the Black Sea to the East, with their deep and hospitable bays, and not far from the country's southern frontier the shores of the Aegean and the Sea of Marmora. Wide plains and mountain valleys stretch out far and wide, cut through by deep rivers, which have kept their ancient names, such as the Danube and the Isker, the Ossum and the Yantra, the Strouma and the Mesta. The peninsula's southern shores are washed by the Aegean and the Sea of Marmora, in whose basins some of mankind's most ancient civilizations developed.

The Rila-Rhodope massif, and further to the North the Stara Planina, as the Balkan Range is locally known, though rising like walls parallel to the southern seas, have never been impassable barriers to the interior of the peninsula. Several of the big rivers in the peninsula, such as the Strouma, the Mesta and the Maritsa, take their source in these mountains, cutting across the mountain barriers and opening the way to the warm sea. Along these natural and eternal roads the peninsula kept in constant touch with the southern countries. To the East, the Black Sea coast faced the horizon of the South Russian steppes and the Caucasus. The big European River Danube was no obstacle to relations with the North, on the contrary, it favoured them, being the oldest route linking the peninsula with the distant lands of Central Europe. The narrow straits, which divide Europe and Asia geographically, were also actually a convenient bridge, along which tribes and peoples have passed from one continent to the other since time immemorial. The straits were never a hindrance to the exchange of the commodities created in distant centres of culture. In the past, the Bulgarian lands were the gateway of Europe to the Orient. They have always been the crossroads of the Mediterranean world along which, since the oldest times, many peoples passed from east to west and from west to east, from north to south and from south to north.



## THE PALEOLITHIC, NEOLITHIC, ENEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGES IN BULGARIA

The Bulgarian lands have been inhabited by man since the most ancient times. The oldest traces of human life are found in the caves of the country's inner mountainous regions. Recently, such traces have, however, also been found in the coastal regions of the Black Sea. They all belong to the second half of the Paleolithic Age, the Mousterian (Fig.1) and Aurignacian periods, which means that primitive man inhabited these lands over 40,000 years ago. The most primitive man-made implements discovered so far in Bulgaria came to light at the Bacho Kiro cave near the Dryanovo Monastery, the so-called stone scrapers and points, quite roughly hewn, the typical weapons of Mousterian man. Flint tools of the Aurignacian period, showing a more perfect technique and a certain further differentiation of implements of labour, have been found in a number of other caves, such as Temnata Douпка (the Dark Hole) near Karloukovo in the region of Loukovit. Implements made of bone were found for the first time among them. Considerable new material has been obtained from the study of caves and rock shelters along the valleys of the Isker and the Ossum Rivers, undertaken in the last few years; this is now being studied by specialists, and promises partly to supplement our knowledge of the life of primitive man in the last periods of the late Paleolithic, as well as of the Mesolithic periods (15,000 to 6000 B. C.), of which no archaeological finds had come to light in Bulgaria until recently.

Man's primitive culture of the Neolithic and the Eneolithic period (Fig.2). and the early Bronze Age is far better known. There is still discussion as to the absolute chronology of these cultures.

It has recently been generally recognized, however, that in the 3rd millenium B. C. primitive society in the Bulgarian lands got to know the first metals: gold, copper and tin, and that it entered into the Bronze Age as early as the second half of the same millenium; the Bronze Age lasted all through the second millenium and the beginning of the first millenium B. C.

The settlements of the farming and cattle-breeding tribes of the Neolithic and Eneolithic ages are still clearly apparent in the plains around the springs and rivers of the eastern half of Bulgaria. They are the so-called settlement mounds or settlements of the «tell» type in which the dwellings of primitive man are found with their rich household goods. They are usually flat mounds which stand out against the horizon from a distance. They have been formed by the ruins of settlements which existed consecutively on one and the same spot over a lengthy period. There are over 400 such settlement mounds. Many more are still unknown. They disappear in the western half of the country. In their stead settlements are found at high dry places or upon naturally defended hills. In the mountainous regions primitive



man continued to inhabit cave dwellings at that time. The most thoroughly studied settlement mound is at the village of Karanovo, in the region of Nova Zagora. Five cultural strata have been discovered here, of which the three lower ones are Neolithic, the fourth — Eneolithic, and the fifth and upper stratum belongs to the Bronze Age. Ruins of dwellings have been found in all strata which, with the exception of those of the fifth stratum, do not greatly differ from each other. They were made of clay and wattles. They had saddle roofs. Traces of a wooden floor were found in one of the dwellings of the 1st stratum. The walls of some of the dwellings were richly decorated with coloured ornaments. The well known model of a dwelling from the settlement mound at Kodja Dermen, Kolarovgrad district, can give an idea of the outward appearance of a dwelling of the Eneolithic Age (Fig. 3). The implements of production were highly perfected. Stone implements — hammers, axes, chisels and so on were polished and well-shaped. Complex or compound implements of labour now appeared: a hoe with a flint cutter and a bone handle, a sickle with a horn foundation and flint edge, etc. At a later period, stone axes and hammers were perforated and given a more solidly fixed handle. Of the fishing implements, the harpoon, fishing net and fish-hook developed. Certain domestic crafts, such as spinning and weaving, also developed. The wonderful handmade pottery, so varied in form and ornamentation, as well as the first attempts at recreating human and animal figures in idols made of stone, clay, bone and, in some rare cases, of gold, are eloquent of the high level of culture attained in this period.

The earliest pottery was distinguished by its painted geometrical ornaments (Fig. 4). There is a very great variety of form in the vessels of the following stage which are characterized by small cylindrical legs and lugs and the absence of painted ornaments (Fig. 5). Vessels with incised geometrical ornaments, filled in with white, predominate in the third period. These three kinds of pottery correspond to the three periods of the Neolithic Age, Upper, Middle and Lower. The fourth period corresponds to the Eneolithic Age. The pottery of this period flowered and attained a high level of beauty. Forms are varied, and zoomorphic vessels appear. Ornamentation is most varied, but graphite ornamentation is the most typical.

The first attempt at presenting the human figure in relief was found in the lowest Neolithic cultural stratum at Karanovo. Primitive plastic objects are found in all Neolithic and Eneolithic settlements. The oldest statuettes are of clay, later ones being made of bone and marble. However, the flowering of idol sculpture coincides with the Eneolithic Age, the age when hoe-cultivation attained its greatest development, when the matriarchate flourished. This explains the predominance of female statuettes, embodying the idea of the Mother Earth as the source of fertility. These are objects in which the earliest religious conceptions of primitive man in Bulgaria are expressed, clearly formed



and materially defined in the image of woman, the ancestress. A seated clay figure from Popovitsa (Papazlii) in the region of Ässenovgrad (now in the Natural History Museum of Vienna) and a marble statuette of a standing woman's figure, found at Blagoevo (Razgrad district) and now in the Razgrad Museum, may be mentioned as masterpieces of this sculpture. The former is 10 centimetres high, the latter is 32 cm. high. The ornamental decoration of the body of the clay statuette may be taken to indicate some kind of a garment.

Clay, bone and marble female idols are distributed over vast areas, including the Aegean world, Asia Minor, the Balkan and Danubian lands and the lands of the Dnieper-Dniester basin. Of course, the figures have their particularities in each of the regions, most of them, however, are the fruit of a common idea: «Mother Earth» as a source of fertility, an idea which seems to have been born first in the Middle East, Egypt and Asia Minor, about the fourth to the third millenium B. C., and to have penetrated from there into the remaining regions and in our country as well, probably at the beginning of the third millenium. In general Neolithic and Eneolithic culture in Bulgaria is not isolated. But while the culture of the first stratum at Karanovo is to be found as a general phenomenon in the entire Mediterranean world, along the middle reaches of the Danube (Yugoslavia and Hungary) and to the north through Rumania as far as the Ukraine, the pottery of the second stratum at Karanovo is far more rarely met with in the neighbouring regions, which indicates that the centre of this culture was in Thrace and North-Eastern Bulgaria. The Eneolithic culture in the Bulgarian lands has many parallels in the neighbouring lands, especially in Yugoslavia and Rumania and in Asia Minor. However strong the local features of these cultures may have been, they were nevertheless not isolated from each other. They developed under strong reciprocal influences. The so-called Trojan cups, found during the excavations of Troy and quite common in Asia Minor, are a striking example of this. They were unknown in Bulgaria until recently. Not long ago they were discovered here, in the pre-historic settlement at the village of Mihalich (in the region of Svilengrad), since recently considered as belonging to the early Bronze Age.

Finds of gold objects have come to light more frequently in the settlements of the Eneolithic Age recently. A gold ring was found in the settlement mound near Roussé, with a diameter of 1.9 cm., and a gold convex plaque (1.8 cm. in diameter) with two small holes. A small female gold idol was also found here. But the find of gold objects at the prehistoric settlement near the village of Hotnitsa, Turnovo district, proved particularly rich. Here 44 gold objects with a total weight of 312 grammes were found in the ruins of one dwelling; among these are four round concave plaques (with a diameter of 2.5 to 3.4 cm.), with a round hole in the centre, and two or three small holes in the upper part; 40 rings were also found, with diameters ranging from 2.5 to 3.4 cm.



In the fifth and uppermost cultural stratum at Karanovo statuettes of humans and animals disappear, and so does the pottery, so varied in form and ornamentation. A change is felt even in the plan of the house — the narrow back side rounds out and forms an apse. An original pottery now appears, much simplified with scant ornamentation, consisting mostly of incised lines. The unusually elongated lugs ending in a knob are characteristic of this pottery. The change in the life of those who inhabited the fifth settlement at Karanovo is striking. Its causes are not yet clear. Certain scholars consider that it was due to the incursions of new tribes, who were already acquainted with bronze. Some link these new tribes with the Thracians.

The same materials found in the fifth cultural stratum of the Karanovo tell were also found in the so-called Dipsiska Mogila settlement mound at the village of Ezero, near Nova Zagora. The houses are the same as in Karanovo; rectangular with two rooms, and a semi-circular wall at the short back side. In the western smaller room, around the hearth and the hand mill, a number of domestic objects were found. Similar ones were also found around the houses. One is, however, impressed by the still-existing predominance of implements made of stone, bone and horn, and by the weapons — stone battle-axes. However, the first metal weapons — copper spearheads — appear together with them. There is no doubt whatever that this is the earliest period of the Bronze age, which is recently thought to begin the second half of the third millenium B. C., when bronze was still an alloy most difficult to obtain and only slightly distributed. Nevertheless, the rare and expensive bronze implements exercised an influence upon the stone implements with their more expedient forms. The stone battle-axe found at the village of Lyulin, Yambol district, shows undoubted imitation of a bronze original.

The settlement of pile-dwellings, found at the bottom of the Varna Lake, near the village of Strashimirovo also belongs to the early Bronze Age. Certain extremely interesting articles and pottery were found there.

The bronze implements and weapons so far found in Bulgaria belong to the late period of this age. Of particular interest are the double axes of the type of those found at the village of Semerdjievo, Roussé district. A bronze sword and a bronze spearhead appear here for the first time. Swords of the so-called Mycenaean type, of the second half of the second millenium have been found in Bulgaria, which plainly indicate the relations of these lands with the Mycenaean culture. Whole treasure-troves of sickles, small bronze axes, as well as the stone moulds in which they were cast, are often found. As to the precise dating of these objects, however, we have no positive data as yet. Perhaps some of them will have to be attributed to the transition from the Bronze to the Iron age. The pottery of this period is also most interesting, particularly that found in North-West Bulgaria. This pottery is dis-



tinguished by a new colour scheme in the ornament, consisting of a combination of linear motifs, incised and covered with white matter. This pottery is widely distributed in the North-Western part of the Balkan Peninsula (Fig. 6).

Metal implements now increasingly made their way into production, intensifying and increasing surplus production. This now led to an exchange of the commodities produced between the individual clans, and also to more frequent clashes between clans and tribes to appropriate the accumulated surpluses. This was followed by a development in weapons, particularly daggers and later swords, which were unknown in the preceding age. Persons captured during such clashes were also put to work in production. Domestic slavery also appeared. Important changes took place in the structure and essence of the clan community. The man now acquired the mastery and the matriarchate soon made way for the patriarchate. Private ownership, mainly of movable property, also appeared, and cattle acquired great importance. The clan community began to disintegrate. Individual families now began to appear, at the head of which stood the father with his unlimited authority over the remaining members of the family. The family community thus came into being.

## THE IRON AGE IN THE BULGARIAN LANDS

### *The Thracians and Greek Colonization*

The Bronze Age in the Bulgarian lands is considered to have ended at the beginning of the first millenium B. C. Profound and complicated changes took place in the economy and history of these lands in this millenium. About the 8th and 7th centuries iron became known in production. The introduction of iron implements of labour gave a new impetus to the further development of society's productive forces. About the end of the 6th century B. C., the potter's wheel also appeared — a clear sign that pottery had detached itself as an independent craft, and that commodity production now existed. In the meanwhile the Greek colonization of the Black Sea and Aegean coasts had begun at the end of the 7th century B. C. In the course of two centuries a whole series of Hellenic colonies appeared here, and the eastern half of the Balkan Peninsula was already closely linked with the economic and cultural sphere of the Mediterranean world.

The name of the Thracians now appears for the first time, being more and more frequently mentioned by ancient Hellenic historians. The Thracians were a numerous people of Indo-European origin, divided into numerous tribes, which were never able to achieve full union and create lasting power as a state. To this day science can give no



final answer to the questions of when the Thracians first appeared in the peninsula, and where they came from. Only one thing is certain — that at the beginning of the first millenium they were already settled in the greater part of the peninsula, leading a settled life as stockbreeders and farmers; that iron was known to them, that they engaged successfully in many crafts, and that the southern tribes along the shores of the Aegean were coming into contact with the Greek Mediterranean world.

Many distant memories of these oldest ties of the Greeks with the Thracians have found expression in ancient Greek mythology, and in ancient Greek epics. On their way to Colchis, the Argonauts stopped to see the blind Thracian King Phineus on the Black Sea coast. He amicably showed them the way to the distant land they sought. In the tenth song of the Iliad, the tragic fate of the Thracian tribal chieftain Rhesus is related, who went to the aid of Troy against the Achaeans with his Thracians. Rhesus appears in all the splendour of his accoutrements — his chariot is wrought with silver and gold, and his weapons, big and golden, as the poet puts it, are worthy only of the immortal gods. The images of Thracian heroes are found in many places in Homer's poems; they are armed like the Greeks, fight like them, and do not yield pride of place to them in any way. Thracian swords are frequently mentioned. Every day ships carried jars of the famous Thracian wine to Ilion. The Thracians were known in epics as horesbreeders, and their land had fertile soil, called by the poet «mother of flocks».

The Iliad and the Odyssey reflect the first clashes of Greeks and Thracians along the Aegean coast, when the Greeks were trying to colonize the Thracian shores, perhaps as early as the 8th or 7th century B. C. We are acquainted with Thracian pottery of that period, which is distinguished by its comparatively beautiful forms and the black brilliance of its surfaces. But it is the wonderful gold treasure found at Vulchi Trun, Pleven district, and now in the Sofia Museum, consisting of 13 vessels weighing 12.425 kg. and made of pure massive gold, which is particularly eloquent of the great changes that took place in the social relations of the Thracians at that time. The technique used in making these vessels is amazing, and so are the perfect skill with which the incrustations are made, and the strange forms of certain of the vessels. This treasure was undoubtedly the property of an eminent Thracian chieftain of the 8th century B. C. (Fig. 7).

The well known four bronze axes, found at different places in North and South Bulgaria, ornamented with rather schematically presented heads or whole bodies of animals, horned cattle or sheep, are also considered as belonging to this same early period. In style, they are closely linked with the culture of the Caucasian peoples. A small bronze amulet, representing a stag, and found at the village of Mihailovo (Dolna Gnoynitsa), near Oryahovo, also strongly recalls the well known amulets of Koban. Finally, one more bronze figurine



of a stag (Fig. 8), found in the region of Sevlievo, should also be mentioned, as it is distinguished by the strongly conventionalized and geometrically shaped forms of the body. All these finds, as well as certain bronze fibulae, bracelets and so on, show the close cultural links of these lands with the culture of the tribes of the Lower Danubian lands and the Caucasus in the early iron age.

From the 6th century on, both the written data on and the archaeological monuments of the Thracians grow more and more plentiful. The Greek historians Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and others, give us detailed information on the Thracian tribes. The most important of these, the Moesians and the Triballi, were settled north of the Balkan Range, the Getae in North-Eastern Bulgaria, the Odrysae to the South in the valley of the Hebrus (Maritsa), while the Bessi inhabited the Rhodope region, along the upper reaches of this river. The tribes of Edoni and Odomanti, and beyond them the Satrae are frequently mentioned in South-East Macedonia. The lands of the basins of the Central and the Upper Strouma were inhabited by the Sintae and Dentheletae. To the West of them was the big tribe of the Paeonians, of which it cannot yet be said with any degree of certainty whether they belonged to the Thracian ethnical circle or to that of the Illyrians. The south-eastern lands of the peninsula were inhabited by a whole series of tribes, among which the Astae occupied an important place.

To the west, the Thracians bordered on the Illyrian tribes. The question of the reciprocal cultural influences of Thracians and Illyrians, who are considered the bearers of the Hallstatt culture in the Balkans, has not been studied as yet at all thoroughly. No systematic research work has been done in the border regions of these tribes. To the south-west, the Macedonians appeared very early and in the second half of the millenium they gradually laid hands on extensive Thracian regions to the east of the valley of the Vardar River, the ancient Axios, as far as the valley of the Strouma. Their rulers Philip II (359-336 B. C.) and Alexander III (336-323 B. C.) tried to conquer the remaining Thracian lands as well.

Nor was the picture to the north-east any different. Here, since time immemorial, the Thracians had had the Scythians as their neighbours who, after Darius's unsuccessful campaign against them (513 B. C.) systematically began to cross the Danube into Thracian lands, and in the 4th century B. C. all Dobroudja of today fell into their hands. The campaigns of Darius (492 B. C.) and of Xerxes (in 480 B. C.) against the European Greeks also passed through the lands of the southernmost Thracians. Classical authors have left us detailed descriptions of the struggles of the Greek colonists against the Thracian tribes of the coast and the interior. The Thracians did not yield their land to the conquerors so easily; it was rich in gold and silver and other similar wealth. About the beginning of the 5th century, there was a great union



of the tribes inhabiting the basin of the River Maritsa, which laid the foundations of the state of the Odrysaе, the first great state of non-Greek origin in Europe. Not only the Macedonians and other neighbouring tribes and peoples, but Athens and Sparta as well, the two strongest Greek states, had to bear its political and military importance in mind. Finally, at the beginning of the 3rd century, the Thracians had the misfortune to clash on their own land with the Celts, who passed through the peninsula, part of them settling in Thrace, and ruling certain Thracian tribes for about 60 years.

It was in these complicated external conditions that the Thracian tribes had to develop, particularly in the second half of the first millennium B. C. up to the advent of the Romans. The rate of development of the productive forces among them was different, depending on the varying effect of external factors of a political and economic nature and on the effect of the geographical milieu. Those of the tribes which came into close contact with the Greek colonists developed their economy more rapidly; others, mainly in the mountainous regions and the northern parts of the peninsula, lagged behind in many respects. The Odrysaе achieved the highest degree of development of productive forces. Inhabiting the fertile valley of the Hebrus, they had free outlets to the western Black Sea colonies, while the southern rivers of the peninsula, particularly the Hebrus, linked them with the Greek colonies on the Aegean coast.

The first Greek colonies along the Thracian coast were only founded at the end of the 7th century B. C. At that time the Greek slave-owning city-states were undergoing profound economic and political changes, accompanied by acute social struggles. Owing to this, a considerable number of citizens of the individual polises were forced to leave their native cities for ever, and to seek land on which they could settle in distant countries.

The Thracian coasts became one of the objectives of Greek colonization. A number of colonies sprang up along the Aegean coast, among which Amphipolis on the River Strouma, Abdera near the mouth of the Mesta, and Maronia, east of present-day Portolagos, were of particular importance. On the northern shores of the Sea of Marmora the most important colony was Perinth (today Eregli), on the European coast of the Bosphorus Byzantium was founded, and further north on the west coast of the Black Sea came Apollonia (Sozopol), Anchialo (Pomorié), Mesambria (Nessebur), Odessos (Varna), Dionysopolis (Balchik), Callatis (Mangalia), Tomi (Constantza), and Istria south of the mouth of the Danube. Greek colonization of the Black Sea west coast came to an end in general lines about the end of the 6th century, but it went on along the Aegean for several decades (Amphipolis was founded in 474 B. C.). The Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor and the islands were those mainly engaged in colonizing. Certain of the colonies were founded by Athens (Amphipolis); of the Dorian cities Megara was more



active, settlers from which city founded Perinth, and on the Black Sea coast Byzantium, Mesambria and Callatis.

The Greek colonies were at first agricultural settlement and trade transit centres. However, contact with the Thracian tribes of the coast and the hinterland, who were already at a fairly advanced stage of development with regard to productive forces, gave the newly founded colonies the opportunity of engaging in a brisk trade with the local population. Their economy quickly developed, and they soon turned not only into flourishing centres of trade, but into centres with their own craft production. As early as the 6th century and the beginning of the 5th century B. C. some of them began to mint silver and later bronze coins, which served not only to satisfy their home market, but also the needs of exchange with the population of the Thracian hinterland. Coins of the Greek colonies are found singly or as treasures all over Thrace.

Of all the colonies mentioned above, only part of those along the west coast of the Black Sea are today within the boundaries of the People's Republic of Bulgaria — Apollonia, Anchialo, Mesambria, Odessos and Dionysopolis. Their location on the shores of the two big Black Sea Bays of Bourgas and Varna proved so favourable from a geographical and economic point of view, that life never died out here. With changed aspects and names these settlements continued their existence without interruption throughout the Middle Ages and the period of Ottoman bondage; they exist to this day, as some of the most important and romantic cities of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. It is precisely this circumstance which makes a complete and systematic archaeological study of the cultural strata of the earlier settlements impossible. They lie deep beneath the foundations of the different districts of the modern towns.

The oldest of these colonies was Apollonia, founded probably at the end of the 7th century by the Miletan Greeks. It was situated on the site of present day Sozopol, upon a small peninsula in the southernmost part of the Bay of Bourgas. Several islands lie around it. Certain ancient authors speak of Apollonia as a town the larger part of which was on an island. Accidental archaeological finds on the neighbouring island of Kirik confirm this piece of information.

The Dorian colony of Mesambria, founded about 510 by settlers from the city of Megara, was similarly situated on the site of present-day Nessebur. It rose upon a rocky peninsula, linked by such a narrow isthmus with the mainland, that it is more like an island with steep shores, sometimes from 13 to 16 m. high.

We have almost no definite conceptions as to the outer architectural appearance of the Greek Black Sea colonies along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, nor of their private and public buildings, fortifications, etc. There can be no doubt, however, that their aspect as cities was no different in general lines from that of the aspect and



character of the remaining Greek polises. They had their town squares and rich public buildings, both civic and religious. There was no lack here of palaestrae so necessary for the physical training and amusement of the free and wealthy citizens, nor gymnasia, in which the sons of these citizens were taught. There was no lack of bouleuterions, where the full-fledged citizens held their meetings, nor of theatres, where different public ceremonies were held and plays were performed. Finally there was no lack of old Greek temple architecture, the most typical representative of the Greek art of building. From written data we know that there was a Temple of Apollo Iatros (The Healer) in Apollonia, for which a colossal bronze statue of this god was cast by Calamis, the well known Athenian sculptor, who worked in the first half of the 5th century B. C. There was a temple of Apollo in Odessos, and also in Mesambria. On an inscription from the latter city, the theatre is also mentioned, where festivals were held in honour of Dionysus.

Painting and sculpture were highly developed in these cities. An interesting archaic statue found in the surroundings of Apollonia and dating back as early as the 6th century B. C. is in the Bourgas Museum. The tombstone of Anaxander is also well known (Fig. 9); in this relief the dead man is shown wrapped in a cloak and playing with his dog. The sculptor has modelled the figure of both man and dog with wonderful skill. The forms of the body are softly modelled and one feels the warm flesh beneath the fine cloak. This tombstone belongs to the end of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century and is one of the masterpieces of Ionic sculpture at that time. A head, probably of Apollo of Odessos, is most characteristic of the style of sculpture in the period of the severe style. It conforms to the style of ancient Greek sculptures of the temple of Zeus in Olympia and may be dated to the second quarter of the 5th century B. C.

Excavations were recently undertaken in the necropolis of Apollonia, which covered a large area beginning at the isthmus to the south on the mainland and extending for several kilometres along the coast. About 900 tombs were found here. Many of them were found to be rich in funeral articles. Most of them are pottery objects, mainly Attic pottery. Ionian pottery is less well represented, chiefly in the earlier tombs. A small type of vessels is mainly found: lecythi, cylixes, canthari, jugs, small dishes and so on. Occasionally larger vessels are also found, for instance, a large black-figure 6th century crater, ornamented with a rich figure composition. Among the funeral gifts there is an abundance of jewelry as well, mostly made of bronze, more rarely of silver and gold. The small vases, round in shape or made in the form of small amphorae of blue and green glass with yellow or black ornaments, are most interesting. They were imported. Their original models are known in the Egyptian glass manufacture.

Recently, digging was also begun at Mesambria. Parts of the city-walls of the early period of its history and of the Hellenistic period



were brought to light. The fortress belt which now surrounds the town with its strongly fortified gate and pentagonal towers is of later date. However, the work here is only just beginning (Fig. 12). Most of the data we possess come from diggings in the necropolis, which lay beyond the isthmus and reached as far as the village of Ravda. An unfinished marble relief from a tombstone belongs to the type of Attic tombstones of the end of the 5th century (Fig. 10). The scene depicted on it recalls in general lines the well known Hegez relief in Athens. This relief and the other finds show that in the Greek colonies along the Black Sea coast art developed in the closest relation with the art of the greatest centres of the Metropolis. Numerous valuable articles, produced by the Greek art industry, were found in the tombs of the Mesambria necropolis. A well preserved bronze hydria of the 4th century, now in the National Museum of Sofia, is distinguished by the ornamentation of the lower part of its vertical handle, where there is a relief of Boreas carrying off Oreithya (Fig. 11). Numerous examples of the goldsmith's art are to be seen in the Bourgas Museum, such as rings, necklets, applications and other objects made of gold and distinguished by the fineness of their workmanship.

As the Greek colonies along the Thracian coast were intermediaries in trade with the interior, the cultural influence of the Hellenes began rapidly to penetrate into the country. The products of Greek art crafts are often found as the prized possessions of Thracian nobles in the remotest parts of the Thracian hinterland, at a great distance from the sea. These articles made their way into the country by way of trade, but also by way of war booty, tribute and taxes, which the Greek colonies were frequently obliged to pay, to purchase their peaceful existence from the Thracians who threatened them.

The Thracian necropolises in the interior of the country are an important source for the study of the cultural and trade relations, which existed between the Greek world and the Thracian lands. In the coastal zones these relations began at a very early date (for instance the wonderful mirror handle, the work of archaic Ionian art, found at the village of Chaukarka (Tasstepe) in the region of Aitos district (Fig. 13), and towards the end of the 6th century, and particularly in the 5th and 4th centuries, they extended all over Thrace. The Thracian necropolises at Douvanlii, Plovdiv district, Mezek, near Svilengrad, Panagyurishtë, Rozovetz (Rahmanli, Plovdiv district), and elsewhere, yielded unexpected results. A number of Greek black-figure and red-figure vases (Figs. 14 & 15) were found in the mounds at Douvanlii, which came from one of the best potteries of Athens. They belong to the period from the end of the 6th to the end of the 5th century. Bronze vessels, hydriae, pails, little jugs of different forms were found not only at Douvanlii, but also at Mezek, at Rouetz (Yoroukler), Turgoviste district in North Bulgaria and elsewhere. Gold jewelry, necklaces of fine filigree work, bracelets,



torques and rings are found in almost every female grave of the 5th and 4th centuries. There is a particular abundance of silver vessels (Fig. 16). One of the most interesting vases made of this metal is the amphora with winged gryphons on the lugs, found at Douvanlii (Fig. 17). In style this vase is entirely analogous with the vases found in Asia Minor, which are the work of Persian toreutics of the period of the Achemenides. From the goldsmiths' shops of Asia Minor a vast number of silver phiales made their way into Thrace; they were found here not only as funeral gifts in the tombs of noble Thracians, but also as part of the treasures, such as the treasure found in Loukovit, for instance, dating back to the 4th — 3rd century B. C. (National Museum, Sofia) (Fig. 18). Among the numerous funeral gifts found in the Mezek tomb, a bronze candelabrum stands out with its exquisite work; it is crowned with the figure of a dancing satyr, one of the most exquisite pieces of ancient sculpture in bronze, dating back to the end of the 4th century. Among all the articles imported into Thrace and found so far the vessels of the golden treasure found at Panagyurishtë take pride of place for artistic workmanship; they are now in the Plovdiv Museum (Fig. 19). This treasure consists of nine vessels: four zoomorphic rhyta, three antropomorphic beakers, one flat phiale and an amphora with handles shaped like centaurs (Fig. 20), all made of pure gold and weighing 6.164 kg. The vessels are richly decorated with figure compositions, taken from Greek mythology. They are a wonderful table set. All indications are that they came from a great centre of the Hellenistic East.

If the Thracian necropolises of the classical period unequivocally reveal Thrace's close cultural links with the antique world around it, the considerable treasures of coins minted by the indigenous tribes (Figs. 31 and 32), the antique cities and Hellenic rulers (Fig. 33) known to us so far are eloquent of the extensive economic foundations upon which these relations were built up, and which made it possible for extensive trade to develop between these countries and Thrace.

The presence of such a large number of works of art made in Greece in the tombs of Thracian nobles clearly shows the high level of cultural refinement among the Thracian aristocracy of that day, and the changes which were taking place in their way of living, which was beginning to resemble the system of the slave-owners of the antique world. Greek cultural influences only reached a narrow circle of Thracian society at first, but gradually extended to ever wider strata.

However, the Thracian necropolises reveal another side of Thracian culture as well. They also contain articles which have nothing in common with the artistic conceptions of antique art. On the contrary, they stand in the closest relation to the so-called «animal style», characteristic of the art of many tribes and peoples who were at the pre-class and early-class stage of development in Europe and the Old Eastern World.



The Thracians had developed the artistic crafts to a high degree. Decorative motifs taken from the animal world were widely used in them. The use of the animal body or its parts, conventionalized and freely combined in such a way as to produce bizarre and fantastic motifs, suitable for the ornamentation of the most ordinary objects used by man in his daily life, is characteristic of the animal style in art; it was used on weapons, implements of production, vessels, and particularly as ornaments sewn on waistbands or placed on horse's trappings, etc. As it is characteristic of the decorative art of those tribes and peoples among whom hunting and animal husbandry play an important part in economy, and among whom totemism developed early on, at the stage of the clan order, the animal style found similar favourable conditions for developing in the decorative art of the Thracians. The earliest example of the Thracian animal style in the Bulgarian lands is a bronze plaque found at Gurchinovo (Kolarovgrad district), on which a number of animal bodies or parts are represented in a highly conventionalized way; the character of the organic original is, however, perfectly clear in them. This plaque dates back to the end of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century B. C. The figure of a lion is represented in its entirety on a gold pectoral found at the Bashova mound near Douvanlii; in this the division of the body into its component parts is clearly marked. Certain finds from the necropolises near Panagyurishtë, Bednyakovo (Pazardjik district), Brezovo (Plovdiv district), Radyuvené (Lovech district), Mezek (near Svilengrad) and elsewhere show the following stage in the development of the Thracian animal style in the 4th century; here a variety of buckles and ornaments used on reins are shaped as separate parts of animal bodies or combinations of them. Moreover, their organic forms are so highly conventionalized that they acquire a completely abstract character (Fig. 21 and 22). In the silver treasure found near Loukovit in 1953, and consisting of numerous objects — vessels, reins and their ornaments — the animal forms in the decoration of two of the pieces are so greatly changed that they unnoticeably merge into the group of plant motifs and are completely lost amid the many-leaved rosettes (Fig. 23).

The Thracian animal style is so close to the Scythian that many scholars do not recognize its existence to this day, and consider the objects found in Thrace as of Scythian origin, or directly produced under the influence of the Scythian animal style. Actually, the Thracians had long had Scythian tribes as their neighbours in the north-eastern parts of the peninsula, as already mentioned above. They had long established political and cultural relations with them. Nevertheless, the extensive distribution of objects decorated in the animal style all over Thrace, the number of which increases on both sides of the Balkan Range, can now be traced as far as the lower reaches of the River Maritsa at Mezek (near Svilengrad), which leaves us no choice but to recognize the fact that in this case we are dealing with the



products of an original Thracian art. Its closeness to Scythian decorative art may be explained by the ethnical, cultural and geographical proximity of these two peoples before they had come into contact with the Greeks, when cattle-raising was the economic basis of both peoples. The fate of this Thracian art is very clearly reflected in many objects in which the strong influence of Greek art is felt. Greek art was mainly instrumental in introducing plant motifs, so beloved of ancient Greek ornamentation; it was also instrumental in introducing whole subjects taken from ancient Greek mythology, in which human and animal forms overcome abstractness and come closer to nature. The silver plaques with scenes from the myth of Heracles, found in Panagyurish-té, are of special interest in this respect (Fig. 24).

The art of building developed early among the Thracians. In the early periods it may be traced on the evidence of tomb architecture. Under the tumuli not only ordinary graves, but entire tombs are found, of great interest on account of their plan and structure. The cupola tombs are of particular interest in this respect; they are built of stone blocks, and later of bricks as well, covered with a false vault. The largest cupola tomb known so far was discovered in a tumulus near Mezek (near Svilengrad), which is 14 m. high and has a diameter of 90 m. The tomb contains a passage 20.65 m. long, 1.55 m. wide and 2.40—2.60 m. high, covered with a triangular vault (Fig. 28). This leads into three chambers, placed along an axis, of which the first two are square, 1.48 m. x 1.26 m. and 1.77 m. x 2.22 m. in size; the first is 3.20 m. and the second 3.52 m. high, and both are covered like the passage. The third, end chamber, which is round with a diameter of 3.30 m. and a height of 4.30 m. is shaped like a bee-hive. This was the tomb chamber. Although this tomb was robbed in antiquity, a large number of bronze vessels were found here, together with the candelabrum described before, and some gold jewelry. The total length of the tomb is nearly 29.95 m. It dates back to the first half of the 4th century B. C.

The brick cupola tomb at Kazanluk is far more modest in its dimensions. Its plan is much simpler, consisting of an open stone antechamber, a short passage and a bee-hive cupola tomb chamber built of bricks. The total length of the brick body is 5.80 m. But its wonderful murals distinguish this cupola tomb from the 13 other similar tombs known so far. They cover the entire inner surface of the passage and the vaulted chamber. Lower down the walls are covered with stucco work imitating a marble plinth, in the passage black orthostat between bands of white blocks, and in the vaulted chamber white orthostat between bands of black blocks. Above the plinth the wall in the passage is plastered in Pompeian red to the vault, where a frieze of plant ornaments, between strips ornamented with architectural decorative motifs, runs around the walls. There is a frieze with a figure composition on the highest part of the vault, containing many horse and foot soldiers divided in two groups placed opposite each other. In the round chamber



there are two friezes with figure compositions above the red plaster (Fig. 26), and framed by bands, decorated with architectonic motifs. The broad lower frieze represents the funeral banquet, developed in a complicated composition with numerous figures (Fig. 27); the upper frieze is a race between three two-wheeled chariots (Fig. 28).

The murals of the Kazanluk tomb are real masterpieces of antique art in the early years of the Hellenistic period. They belong to an art imbued with originality and fresh realism, so characteristic of ancient Greek art in the Hellenistic period. But nevertheless, there is something new in the paintings of the Kazanluk tomb. It is expressed in the general scheme of decoration, which is conditioned by the architectural form of the cupola tomb, alien to Greek art; this something new is also manifest in the individual treatment of the figures with their non-Greek particularities, and with the penetration of elements of a non-Greek national origin. Undoubtedly, the novelty in the Hellenistic art of the Kazanluk tomb was conditioned by the new environment into which Greek art had penetrated and found conditions of developing further. This new environment influenced it with its own traditions, its own aesthetic norms, customs, way of living and relations which were not identical with those of Hellas. That is precisely why the murals in the Kazanluk tomb are, on the one hand, an original monument of the art of the period of early Hellenism in general and, on the other, a monument of the art of Thrace, a region distant from the classical Hellenic world, where the youngest class society, the class society of the Thracian Odrysae, was in the process of formation along the outer edge of the antique world.

Of the life and culture of this society we can best judge today by the archaeological finds and data revealed by excavations at the Thracian city of Seuthopolis. The ruins of this city were found not far from the village of Koprinka, near Kazanluk, where excavations were in progress from 1948 to 1954, in connexion with the construction of the big Georgi Dimitrov Dam.

Seuthopolis lay on the left bank of the River Tonsos (today the Toundja). The river girded it on the west and the south, and a small tributary of the Toundja guarded it on the east. Its defence was, however, strengthened by a wall, two metres thick, equipped with towers and bastions. The fortified part of the town covers an area of 5 hectares. The rich lived here in their spacious and strongly built houses. The ruler's palace, extending over an entire district, and separated from the remaining town by strong walls, rose in the north-eastern part. The city was built after a previously established plan. Two gates, well defended — one by bastions, led to the centre of the city from the north and the west. Two principal streets led to it, intersecting at right angles at the city square (agora). The remaining streets ran parallel to the main thoroughfares, and were consequently perpendicular to each other. The houses are most interest-



ing as regards plan. They usually have many rooms arranged around a central court. Some of the houses were two-storeyed and had balconies supported by wooden columns. Among other features, the *pastas* type of house, the predecessor of the Greek peristyle house, is also found here (Fig. 29). Water was supplied by wells. Nor was a drainage system lacking, as both domestic and city drains are found. The ruler's residence was the most important building, with a 40 m. front (Fig. 30); it was a two-storey building, richly decorated and possessing among others, a vast chamber, decorated with incrustations in many colours. Many coins were found in the city — Thracian (Fig. 34), Macedonian and so on. Trade and the crafts were well developed here. The population outside the town was mainly occupied with farming, cattle raising and fishing. Many objects were found in Seuthopolis, especially vessels, mainly pottery both locally made and imported. Oil and wine were imported from the Island of Thasos, as evidenced by the numerous Thasian amphora-stamps.

Seuthopolis, founded by Seuthes III (Fig. 34), the Thracian ruler, contemporary of Alexander the Great and Lysimachus, only existed up to the end of the 3rd century, when it was burnt down and destroyed.

The 3rd century was a most stormy period in the history of Thrace. The wars of the Diadochi and the Epigoni more than once affected the Thracian lands to the South along the coast. Here, the Seleucids, the Ptolomids and the Macedonians all contended for supremacy with the Attalids. To these wars were added the invasions of the Celts, who maintained themselves in Thrace for about 60 years, where they founded a state of their own. Its last ruler (Cavarus) minted bronze and silver coins, established relations with the Greek colonies and interfered with their relations, as was the case with Byzantium, for instance. Other objects of Celtic origin besides the coins of Cavarus are found in the Bulgarian lands. The capital of their kingdom, Tyls, has not yet been discovered. Certain tumuli are attributed to the Celts, but they are absolutely poor. One of the most beautiful finds discovered so far and certainly of Celtic origin, is a gold torque of considerable size found at the village of Archar, Vidin district.

At the end of the 3rd century B. C. the Roman state appeared in the Western part of the Mediterranean as a new world power, and after defeating Carthage, its most dangerous rival, it intervened in the relations of the Hellenic states in the east. The Balkan Peninsula, with its fertile plains and natural wealth, with its freedom-loving and militant peoples and tribes, stood in their way. The struggle between Rome and the Balkan peoples lasted for over two centuries until the peninsula was conquered. The Thracians were the last to lay down their arms. The highly developed military technique and organization of the Romans got the better of the bravery and self-denial of the Thracians. Out of their lands were formed the two Balkan provinces of Moesia, about 15 A. D., and Thrace about 46 A. D. An extremely



numerous army was placed in the Roman camps and fortresses, mainly along the Danube. It was ready to appear at any threatened spot, moving rapidly along the newly made roads, and to crush any attempt at an uprising on the part of the subjected peoples.

#### MOESIA AND THRACE IN THE PERIOD OF ROMAN RULE

A number of towns were founded in Moesia and Thrace in the period of Roman rule; some of them grew out of the civilian settlements around the Roman camps on the Danube at Ratiaria (Archar), Almus (Lom), Oescus (Ghighen), Novae (near Svishtov), and Durostorum (Silistra); others developed on the site of former Thracian settlements at important crossroads, near mineral springs and so on. Such are Martianopolis (Reka Devnya), Nicopolis ad Istrum in Moesia, Serdica (Sofia), Pautalia (Kyustendil), Augusta Trajana (Stara Zagora), Nicopolis ad Nestum (not far from the town of Gotsé Delchev) and a number of other towns. Of the old towns in Thrace the Greek colonies along the Black Sea and Aegean coasts continued to exist, and so far as we know, in the interior — Philippopolis (Plovdiv), Cabyle (not far from the town of Yambol) and in Eastern Thrace — Uscudama (Hadrianopolis), Bizye and others. Roman rule was favourable to the development of urban life in both provinces. Conditions were favourable here for the appearance of a considerable and wealthy landed aristocracy, based on exploitation of the population, mainly the peasantry; in the course of time this aristocracy included elements of a local origin within its ranks. This class, regardless of its ethnical origin, became the prop and mainstay of Roman rule, seeing in the latter a guarantee for its own prosperity. The entire history of Moesia and Thrace under Roman rule is one of constant struggle of the oppressed masses in the economic sphere of the antique world in this period. They developed their productive forces still further, experienced a great cultural advance, and the predominance of the antique Graeco-Roman culture was fully established. Considered from the outside, the period of Roman domination was one of a great economic and cultural advance in the lands of the Balkan Peninsula. However, this was only one side of the matter. The prosperity which Roman domination brought here was the privilege of a minority only, viz. of the ruling class. True peace appeared to have set in, the *pax Romana*. But it was a peace which the cruel Roman military regime imposed by sheer force upon the broad strata of the population — the peasants, the small artisans and the slaves. Actually, here too, as in the remainder of the Empire, contradictions in the slave-owning society grew more and more acute; they caused great unrest in the country, and particularly from the 3rd century on were expressed in endless social and political revolts of the exploited, which merged with invasions of the peoples and tribes of the north and north-east.



A large part of the cities which sprang up in the period of Roman domination, continue their life to this day, having changed both their name and their aspect: Sofia, Kyustendil and so on. The remains of these cities lie deep under the present-day districts, and it is therefore very difficult to study them. There are other cities also, which had a shorter term of life; at the end of late antiquity they fell into decay, lost their importance, and the Middle Ages found them reduced to the status of small settlements. Today their ruins lie aside from the modern towns and villages and wherever even insignificant diggings have been done visitors may still feel the greatness of their past. Nicopolis ad Istrum, not far from Turnovo, on the banks of the river Rossitsa, was one of these antique cities (Fig. 35). During the excavations made here the city's forum, decorated with colonnades and statues of the Emperors and eminent citizens, was found. Even today, the broad streets, paved with huge stone slabs, under which the city's drainage system lay, make a strong impression on one. Some of the largest public buildings were situated around the forum. The remains of the bouleuterion — a small portico — is visible on the west side, and to the south of them the city theatre.

At Oescus on the Danube, near the present village of Ghighen, in the region of Nikopol, archaeological excavations brought to light several streets and the buildings along them. This district was near the centre of the city — the forum. Among the monuments revealed mention should first be made of the colonnade of the Temple of Fortuna and of a huge building with many rooms, richly ornamented with marble and stucco work; the celebrated 3rd century mosaic with a scene from Menander's comedy *The Achaean*s was found in one of the rooms (Fig. 36). Outside the city walls a large building with many rooms was found, the plan of which is interesting. This building, as well as other accidental finds, show the steady growth of the antique cities in Bulgaria, which in time outgrew their city walls, because of the increasing numbers of their population. The new residential quarters had to be built outside them. The same phenomenon is observed in Philippopolis, Serdica and elsewhere.

In Sofia many interesting monuments of ancient Serdica have also been found. The diggings carried out in connexion with the reconstruction of the city's centre, made it possible to discover one of the most densely populated quarters of ancient Serdica around the church of Saint George. To the north, opposite it, separated only by a street, lay a square building with amphitheatrically placed seats. To the east of the Church of St. George there was a building with a big octagonal room, belonging to a religious cult. A street to the west, paved with large stone blocks, separates this building from the Church of St. George (Fig. 37). It was possible to establish the entire plan of this building, which dates back to the 3rd and 4th century A. D. and is of a most unusual type, quite original in plan, consisting of several rooms, plac-



ed perpendicularly to the central axis and arranged in a suite. It was supplied with heating. The precise use for which it was intended has not been determined as yet. Part of this building, namely the vaulted part, was preserved throughout the following centuries, up to the present day, being used as a church in the middle ages, and as a mosque in Turkish times.

Another building in Sofia, preserved from the end of the antique period, is the Church of St. Sophia of which further mention will be made (Fig. 56). The excavations undertaken many years ago around, and particularly in the church itself, established that the present building, which is a vaulted basilica with a cupola, was built only in the 6th or 7th century A. D. on the site of two smaller 4th or 5th century churches, which had been consecutively destroyed by the invading Huns and Goths. This was a cemetery church situated outside the city walls. The floors of both the older churches were covered with beautiful mosaics (Fig. 38). Numerous graves were found around the churches at the time, as well as masonry tombs, some of which were richly decorated with mural paintings. The necropolis is Early Christian and dates back to the 3th or 6th century. There are also graves of the 10th to 14th century.

Although very rarely, certain ancient buildings were preserved for a long time, and even up to the present day in certain other towns. Thus, for instance, even to this day the ruins of a big building, called the Roman tower, are to be seen in Varna; its walls bear traces of having been built and re-built many times at later dates. Passages of tremendous length now form deep basements beneath this building. It was probably a big public building or fortified palace of the 3rd century A. D. which was later partly destroyed, only parts of it being used in the Middle Ages and preserved to the present day. In Plovdiv the remains of Trimontium's (the Town of Three Hills) walls have been preserved on Djambaz Tepé; they show traces of extensive repairs at a later date. However, the walls of the former Roman city of Augustae — today known as Hissarya Spa near Levskigrad, are in the best state of preservation. The southern city gate, known as the «Camels» (Fig. 39) impresses the approaching traveller with its colossal body, rising on the road leading to the town, although it has lost the two square towers that formerly flanked it, and its upper part. Its plan, and particularly its superstructure, with a tower in the centre, brings to mind the images of city gates found on the coins that were minted in the cities of Thrace and Moesia in the 2nd and 3rd centuries B. C. Far more important ruins of the old Roman fortifications were preserved up to the 19th century at many places in the Bulgarian lands, particularly along the Danube. The ruins of Trajan's Gate in the Ihtiman Pass were particularly imposing; however, as absolutely nothing was done to preserve these ruins before the Liberation from Ottoman bond-



age and in the years immediately following it, a large part of them was completely destroyed.

One of the most interesting and massive monuments of funeral architecture in the period of Roman rule has been preserved under a mound near the town of Pcmorié (ancient Anchialo) (Figs. 40, 41 & 42). The tomb is distinguished both by its plan and its size, as well as by its construction and the original disposition of its space. It consists of a covered vaulted passage, 22 m., long, flanked on both sides by square chambers; the passage leads to the funeral chamber, which is round and has a diameter of 11.60 m., with a brick column in the centre, 3.5 m. in diameter, hollow on the inside with an opening on the south side opposite the passage, and at its top. The space between the column and the walls of the tomb forms a ring-shaped corridor, 4.05 m. wide, 5.50 m. high, and semi-cylindrically vaulted, with the column supporting the inner side of the vault, and thus forming a funnel-shaped extension. The tomb is a real mausoleum. Despite the new manner of construction and the new architectural conception, certain elements of the architecture of the old Thracian cupola tombs have, nevertheless, been preserved in it. The mausoleum may be dated back to the 4th century A. D.

In aspect, planning, architecture and art, the cities of Moesia and Thrace were no different from those of the eastern Hellenistic provinces. Monumental sculpture, which was, in general, a form of art alien to the Thracians, became widespread towards the end of the 2nd century A. D. Excavations in towns and settlements constantly reveal pedestals of statues, and the statues themselves; they represent various deities both of the Graeco-Roman pantheon (Figs. 44 and 45) and of the cults of other countries and peoples, which invaded and rapidly spread throughout the two provinces, displacing the local Thracian cults to a large extent. One of the largest statues ever found, probably of Demeter, 2.83 m. in height without its pedestal, came to light at Oescus years ago. The head and arms are lacking; they had been separately made and attached to the trunk. The sculptor had treated the draperies of its clothing with great skill and lightness, not only clearly stressing the difference in the material of chiton and cloak, but also successfully modelling the forms of the body beneath its garments. The works of the old Greek masters of the classical period of Greek art were particularly highly prized by the cities of Thrace and Moesia. A very fine copy of Praxiteles's Eros came from Nicopolis ad Istrum. (Fig. 43). From the Roman camp at the village of Riben, Pleven district, comes a somewhat fragmentary copy of the statue of the Resting Satyr, also by Praxiteles. In the sphere of sculpture here too, as in the other Roman provinces, portrait sculpture developed extensively. It followed, on general lines, the development of this art in Rome and Italy. But here too certain nuances of provincial art are noticeable. The museums of Bulgaria abound in Roman busts — portrait busts of



the Emperors, which ornamented the public places and squares, portrait busts of eminent citizens, to whom statues were erected at the decision of the municipalities in gratitude for the services they had rendered their native cities. And lastly portrait sculpture was extensively used on the tombs. Among the numerous works of this nature the head of Gordian III (238—244), now in the Sofia Museum, deserves mention (Fig. 46); it belonged to a bronze statue of this emperor, which stood in Nicopolis ad Istrum.

However, together with the great master sculptors, who worked in the workshops of the cities in the style of the official Roman-Hellenistic art, and whose vast output barely managed to satisfy the great needs of construction in the Roman cities, the workshops of the local masters were at work no less intensively in the villages around the local shrines; they had to satisfy the religious needs of the masses in connexion with the rites of the local cults and the cult of the dead. The custom of consecrating stone tablets or statuettes with the images of the gods worshipped in the small village shrines, or of putting up monuments on tombs with symbolical imagery connected with the activity of the deceased, had penetrated the widest social strata under the influence of the Roman and Hellenistic religion. In the conventional images of the gods of the Roman and Greek pantheon, the Thracian population continued to worship its local gods with their specific Thracian names, among which the cult of the «*Thracian Horseman*» was particularly widespread (Fig. 47). Thousands of votive tablets are preserved in the Bulgarian museums upon which the whole scale of the Thracians' religion in this period is depicted (Fig. 48).

Of no less interest in the study of the popular art are the funereal steles with their great variety of reliefs. Here regional differences stand out clearly. In the lands of the ancient Greek colonies and in Thrace the influence of the gravestone sculpture of the Hellenistic provinces is very clearly felt, with its predominating scene of the funereal banquet. To the south-west in the valleys of the Strouma and the Mesta there are traces of the tombstone sculpture of Macedonia with sculptured portraits and the figure of the Thracian Horseman, presenting the deceased as a hero (Fig. 50). Finally in the lands to the north of the Balkan Range the Roman type of funereal steles are widespread, with their long inscriptions, and initially more modest ornamentation in relief, while portraits and other motifs were introduced later (Fig. 49). Here too, in this large sphere of gravestone sculpture individual smaller regions appear, in which definite and constant types of funereal steles are found.

The presence of good soft limestone and crystal marbles in the mountainous regions contributed much to the development of sculpture. The remains of the big Roman quarries are visible to this day not far from the village of Reka Devnya, Varna district, and at the villages of Hotnitsa and Moussina, Turnovo district; they provided enough



building material for the cities, as well as all that the stone-masons' workshops and sculptors' studios in Moesia could require. Thrace was supplied with good marble from the quarries in the Rhodope massif.

In comparison with the architectural and sculpture monuments, remains of painting in the Roman period are quite scarce. It is true that the old traditions of decorating the walls of houses with stucco work and mosaics, and of ornamenting the tombs of eminent citizens with frescoes continued to exist. At this time mosaics were particularly extensively used to ornament the floors of rich men's houses, the baths and other public buildings. Mosaics with a variety of decorative motifs, among which there are entire compositions, have been found at many places of recent years. Mention has already been made of the mosaics found at Oescus (Fig. 36) and numerous other finds of the sort may be enumerated. Among the best preserved murals, which date back to the end of the 4th century, the period of Theodosius I, are the murals in a tomb near the town of Silistra (Figs. 51 & 52). This tomb is not a very big one, 3.30 x 2.60 m., with a height of 2.30 m. at its zenith. However, on passing through its low entrance the visitor's eyes are dazzled by the richness and variety of its interior decoration. The perpendicular walls and the vaulted roof are so richly painted that not a single corner has been left untouched by the artist's brush. The couple, who were buried here, have been painted exactly opposite the entrance. Four men and maid-servants flank them on each side, offering them different objects, connected with their toilet. The vault is covered with a network of circles and octagons, filled with the figures of birds, plant motifs and hunting scenes (Fig. 53). The murals of the tombs found near the Church of St. Sophia in Sofia show great variety in the system of decoration. However, they are the work of another art, namely, the art of the Early Christians.

A profound change was wrought by Christianity in the spiritual life of Thrace and Moesia in late antiquity; this religion had penetrated into the country very early on and left its imprint on both architecture and art in these lands. After Christianity had been proclaimed as the only religion of the State in the reign of Theodosius I (379—395), the church hurled itself with unheard of fanaticism upon all that was pagan or might recall paganism. Many monuments of art were destroyed, many shrines and temples were ruined or turned into Christian churches. However, the church soon realized the tremendous part which art was to play in disseminating and introducing her ideas among the ignorant masses. In the East, sculpture was rejected as an art closer to the real image of the original. Painting, which provided greater opportunities of passing more easily over to the abstract spiritual treatment of natural forms, remained the only permitted imitative art. A new architectural form was necessary for the Church, which had established a ritual alien to the pagan ritual. This brought the religious Christian architecture into being, which, availing itself of



many of the antique pagan traditions of building, created new forms in the monumental architecture of the Middle Ages.

In the Bulgarian lands only a few examples of early Christian sculpture are known to us. Among them a marble 4th century statue of the Good Shepherd, found at the village of Selanovtsi, near Oryahovo, deserves mention, as well as a big 5th century bronze lamp with a handle in the form of a cross, and a cover decorated with the head of an emperor, found at Stara Zagora (Fig. 54). The latter belongs to one of the finest and rarest types of Early Christian lamps known to archaeology. A sculptured portrait of a man in limestone, found in a place known as Kozyak Grad near the village of Obzor, not far from Pomorié (Fig. 55), belongs to the sculpture of that period, although it is of profane and not Christian origin. The huge wide open eyes and the simplified and schematized features of the face are typical of this art. The trend of abstraction from the natural primitive form has been brought to the extreme. Only the most typical elements of a human face have been presented here. The portrait from Kozyak Grad, which dates back to the time of Justinian, is one of the latest representatives of the free sculpture, then generally dying out in the Eastern Orthodox world as a branch of art. For the present, Early Christian painting is best represented in the necropolis around the Church of St. Sophia in Sofia. Some of the masonry tombs are ornamented with mural paintings in which plant motifs or motifs taken from Christian symbolism predominate. What impresses one in the decorative system of these tombs, however, is the presence of elements of the Hellenistic decorative art as well, viz., the division of the walls into separate rectangles, imitating marble panelling.

However, Early Christian art found extensive possibilities of development in the field of architecture. One of the main centres of this art is Serdica, in which there was, at the beginning of the 4th century, such a large Christian community that an oecumenical council was even called here. One of the oldest churches with a baptistry in our lands was found when the Party House was being built; it lay outside the walls of Serdica, near the East Gate.

Many and varied forms found their way into church architecture in Thrace and Moesia. In the first place, the extensive distribution of the Hellenistic basilica, with an ordinary saddle roof, should be noted. Such for instance was the one-apse basilica in the place known as Pirinch Tepé near Varna, with a narthex and a baptistry, the Sea Basilica in Mesambria, which had a narthex and three apses, and the one at the village of Oycharovo (Choban Deré), Turgovishte district, with an apse shaped like a horse-shoe. The second type of basilica found in the Bulgarian lands are vaulted basilicas with or without cupolas. For instance, one of the basilicas in Hissarya (in the region of Levskigrad) and those at the village of Golyamo Belyovo, Pasardjik district, the Elenska Church (Church of the Stag) near Pirdop and some others, are of this sort. Most in-



interesting are single-nave cruciform churches, built in the 5th and 6th centuries, which are of one type, although they show considerable differences; their origin should be sought for in the East. Churches of this kind have been found at the village of Ivanyané, near Sofia, and at the village of Tsurkvishté (Klissé Keui), near Pirdop. It is accepted that the cruciform plan of these churches has influenced the plan of the above-mentioned Church of St. Sophia in Sofia. This is one of the best preserved churches, and is a remarkable example of early Christian architecture in Bulgaria (Fig. 56). It is a basilica with a cupola, nave and two aisles which, besides the narthex has a transept, placed in front of the apse; together with the nave this forms a cross, inscribed within the plan of the church. St. Sophia is distinguished by its harmonious and balanced form, as well as by the simple, but expressive lines of its silhouette. Actually, it dates to the beginning of a new period. Finally, the church at Djanavar Tepé, near Varna, is more unusual in plan, with its single nave and interior apse, the four square divisions at the side of the altars and the small narthex. At the end of this period, with which late antiquity comes to an end in our lands, we find the imposing ruins of the so-called Red Church near Peroushtitsa (Fig. 57), which is one of the most monumental representatives of church architecture in the pre-Bulgarian period. A central building with a dome which was supported by four pilasters, connected four conches on the south and north sides, joined by a semi-circular corridor, with a double narthex on the west side. Here too we see the continuation of certain forms of Roman mausoleum architecture, interpreted in a new way, of course, and adapted to the requirements of the Christian cult.

#### THE BULGARIAN MIDDLE AGES

In the 6th and 7th centuries A. D. changes of tremendous historical importance took place in the Balkan Peninsula. The endless unrest of the slaves, the peasantry and the city poor, together with the invasions of other peoples from the north severely shook the foundations of the slave-owning Roman Empire. Its western half was done away with in 476. Only the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantium still remained in existence as the mainstay of the disappearing slave-owning society. However, its state and military organization was so badly shaken owing to the existing and ever-growing social and economic crises, that when the mass invasions of Slavs and Avars in the 6th century, and later of the proto-Bulgarians from the Danube, began, it proved powerless to stop them. A certain consolidation of the Byzantine state power under Justinian (527-565) delayed the process of decay. Justinian undertook construction on a large scale in the Balkan lands. Procopius, the Byzantine historian, who was a contemporary of Justinian, has left us a long list of towns and villages, which



were affected by the Emperor's building activities. There is hardly a town whose fortified walls were not at that time either repaired or rebuilt from their foundations. Certain parts of the ruins of the walls, which surrounded the ancient towns and camps, most certainly belong to this period, as is the case with the fortresses of Serdica (Sofia), Pautalia (Kyustendil), perhaps of Hissarya (near Levskigrad), and other places. The settlement Golemanovo Kalé (fort) near Sadovets (25 km. south-west of Pleven), was built at about that time; it is a most interesting site in which town-planning in late antiquity may be studied. Despite everything, the successive waves of Slav invasions swept over the peninsula. In the 7th century, the major part of the peninsula was in their hands, and they had settled in it for ever. Its ethnical aspect had changed entirely.

The Slavs made their appearance in the peninsula when their primitive communal relations were in a process of complete disintegration. Social stratification had already made its appearance among them. The conquest of the Byzantine provinces in the Balkan Peninsula, where the Slavs clashed with the much higher material culture of the antique world, and where far more advanced social and economic relations existed, accelerated the process of further development in their production forces and of the further social stratification among them. By the first half of the 7th century, two new fundamentally antagonistic classes had already been formed among the Slavs, who had settled in the eastern and southern lands of the peninsula — that of the tribal aristocracy, who had accumulated vast estates, and of the farmers with small holdings. This inevitably led to the creation of a state organization, as an instrument of the ruling class in oppressing and exploiting the masses. The constant danger from the now increasing power of the Byzantine Empire had a great effect on the appearance of the state among the Slavs in the Balkans, as the force of resistance of tribal alliances was already insufficient to cope with it. Thus, in the second half of the 7th century A. D., the first Slav state of the «Seven Slav Tribes» appeared to the north of the Balkan Range. Together with the remaining Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula it was incessantly at war with Byzantium when Asparouh's proto-Bulgarians, who were of Turk origin, appeared on the Danube. In the face of the common danger from Byzantium and the Avars, a close alliance was formed between the Slavs and the proto-Bulgarians within the framework of the State of the Seven Slav Tribes. Owing to the better military organization of the proto-Bulgarians its consolidation was assured and its force of resistance strengthened. By virtue of a peace treaty concluded in 681 Byzantium gave *de facto* recognition to the new Slav-Bulgarian state.

In the first centuries of its existence the proto-Bulgarian element was predominant in the government. Gradually, in the course of time, this element merged with the Slavs, who had reached a considerably



higher degree of development from both a social and cultural point of view. The Slav sea also swallowed up the remnants of the Hellenized and Romanized Thracian population. Only the name of the Bulgarians was preserved as the ethnical denomination of the South-Eastern Balkan Slavs, who created the medieval Bulgarian-Slav state.

The Bulgarian people were formed amid these complicated social, economic, ethnical, historical, political and cultural conditions; they retained their Slav essence, quickly developed productive forces, and created, in the early Middle Ages, on the foundations of the rich heritage of antiquity they found, a culture, essentially Slav in nature, which attained a high level already in the early Middle Ages.

Of recent years one of the main tasks of Bulgarian archaeology has been to discover and study the culture of the Slavs in the first centuries following the time when they settled in the Balkan Peninsula. The importance of this culture was formerly insufficiently recognized. In 1948 a shaft was sunk in the settlement near the village of Maluk Preslavets (Kadi Keui), in the region of Tout-rakan, on the Danube, where a Slav settlement, fortified with a wall, was found next to the ruins of a camp, built for the Danubian limes in the period of late antiquity. Several expeditions in North-East and North-West Bulgaria provided valuable material for the archaeological map of Bulgaria. They discovered remains of different Slav settlements for further study. The joint Soviet, Bulgarian and Rumanian expedition, which carried out excavations near the village of Popina, Silistra district, in 1954, and the subsequent independent work of the Archaeological Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences provided extremely important results. Part of a fortified settlement on the bank of the Danube was studied; it appears to have arisen in the stormy and restless period of the Migration of the Peoples, as a point of defence on the East Roman Empire's Danubian frontier, in the 4th to 6th centuries A. D. The settlement was surrounded by a moat and a high wall, faced on the outside with stone. Later, probably about the 8th century, the Bulgarian Slavs settled in this stronghold and as they felt secure from external danger, utilized the old building materials of the fortress for new buildings. Semi-dugout dwellings of that day were found, with hard clay floors, wooden walls plastered with clay, and fine stone hearths. Articles used in daily life, such as iron implements, ploughshares, axes, sickles, knives and so on, pottery vessels, bone awls, belts, jewelry and many other objects, reveal different sides of the life of this population at a period when the Bulgarians were forming a united people.

Archaeological excavations and studies in the surroundings of Popina revealed traces of another Slav settlement as well; this one, however, lay at a distance of about 2 km. to the west of the Kalé (fort) in a place known as Djezhovi Lozya (the Djezhov's vineyards). Its three cultural strata correspond to the three stages in the development



of a Slav settlement, which was founded here as early as the 7th century. A primitive type of handmade pottery is typical of the oldest period. The second stratum reveals the introduction of a primitive potter's wheel which was set in motion by hand. The pottery of this period was still made by hand, but was finished on the wheel. The uppermost and last stratum belongs to the time in which the Slavs learnt to throw their pottery on an ordinary wheel, which increased production, and at the same time enabled them make pots of a great variety of forms and ornamentation. The excavations of the settlement at Djezhovi Lozya enabled us for the first time to learn something of the life of the Slavs in the earliest period after they settled in the Peninsula. The settlement consisted of a considerable number of dwellings of the dug-out type, gathered in several separate groups. Besides the rectangular stone hearths in the dwellings, cupola-shaped ovens had been built of clay outside in the yards. The local production of pots is evidenced by the presence of potters' kilns. One of them is in an excellent state of preservation, and shows its particular construction. It is round, made of clay, with a hearth and a thick grid on which the unbaked clay vessels were placed to be fired. About 70 pots in a great variety of forms were found around this kiln, as well as a heap of the clay used in making them. These pots were thrown on a hand-worked wheel, and therefore belong to the second period of the settlement. Among the pots of the earliest period, the small clay dishes, used in baking bread on the hearth, are of particular interest. Most of them, like the pots, are not ornamented. The pottery of the second stratum is mostly ornamented, however, with groups of undulating or horizontal lines placed at certain intervals. The pottery of the third and uppermost stratum is widely known with its undulating and horizontal lines, often combined, or with its polished bands, forming a network of diamond-shaped ornaments. It is precisely this type of pottery with polished bands, which certain scholars ascribe to the proto-Bulgarians.

Besides pottery, the inhabitants of the Slav settlement at Djezhovi Lozya were acquainted with a number of other crafts. From the ore found in the marshes they obtained iron and forged different tools: iron knives, sickles, hangers and so on. Agriculture was one of the main occupations of the inhabitants. The numerous bones of animals clearly indicate that stockbreeding was also well developed. Finally, the nearness of the Danube and the marshes around it, provided opportunities for the development of fishing, as is evidenced by the weights for fishing nets found here, together with iron fishhooks and plentiful finds of fishbones.

To supplement the distinctive features of the oldest Slav culture found in the Bulgarian lands, certain of the materials discovered in the old Slav necropolis at the village of Boukyovtsi near Oryahovo, 8 km. south of the Danube, should be mentioned; several clay urns were found here, the forms and ornaments of which are characteristic of



8th century Slav ceramics. They served for burials and that is why broken and burnt human bones were found in them together with bronze ear-rings and glass beads. Individual skeletons were found together with these burial urns, which shows that the Slavs were accustomed to both these burial rituals: cremation of the body and burial of the body. The glass beads found here are of particular interest, as they show a great variety of form and colour, and are in most cases multi-coloured. Strung on a string like necklaces, they served as effective decoration for the costume worn by Slav women.

Another necropolis, discovered 2 km. to the east of Razdelna station, Varna district, also dates back to the 8th century. Here burials were mostly done by cremation, the bones and any remnants of the dead person's clothing being placed as a rule in the urns, and very rarely in the graves. The urns were mostly buried straight in the ground. There were cases, however, in which they were placed in a burial pit faced with square bricks or river stones, just big enough to hold the urns. The latter were thrown on potters' wheels and vary considerably in size and form. According to ornamentation, they fall into two groups — the one belonging to the Slav type of ceramics, the other, distinguished by its ornamentation, consisting of polished bands, which is ascribed to the proto-Bulgarians. No definite answer can be given to the question whether this necropolis is a mechanical mixture of Slav and proto-Bulgarian burials, or actually reflects the intermingling of the two cultures in the process of the creation of a united Slav-Bulgarian people.

The Slavs and proto-Bulgarians brought a culture of their own, but they also found the rich heritage of antiquity, which they not only preserved but utilized creatively in further developing their own culture. To this day the ruins of the proto-Bulgarian capitals of Pliska and Preslav are undoubted proof of the high level of culture attained by the Bulgarian state in the 9th and 10th centuries.

We do not know precisely when the first capital, Pliska, was founded. Under Khan Kroum (803-814) and Khan Omourtag (816-831) it already had the aspect and plan of which we can form an opinion, more or less, from the ruins discovered. Actually, only an insignificant part of Pliska has been studied. The extensive terrain it occupied — about 23 square kilometres — still hides many secrets and surprises. But there can be no doubt whatever that the history of the first Bulgarian capital of Pliska began as a settlement far earlier than the time when the proto-Bulgarian settled in these parts.

Pliska lies in a wide plain, which reaches as far as the first foothills of the Preslav section of the Balkan Range to the south, and as far as the slight hills of the Loudogorié to the north and north-east. The ruins of old forts and lesser fortifications are still apparent at many places on the surrounding heights, and traces of settlements, dating back to pre-Roman and Roman times are to be found in the foot-



hills. An important road crosses the Plain of Pliska, leading from the interior to the shores of the Black Sea; the passes of the Eastern Balkan Range are also quite near, linking the Danube with the lands to the south of the Balkan Range.

Pliska was built on a very curious plan, quite unusual for the town-planning of the older settlements known in these regions. A deep and broad moat with an earthen embankment on the inner side, reaching a height of ten metres, and which may have been topped by a wooden palisade, surrounded the city in the form of a lengthened trapeze, lying in a north-south direction, its long sides 7 km. long and its short ones 3.9 km. on the northern side and 2.7 km. on the southern side. There fortified earthworks defended a series of settlements, scattered over the extensive area. They formed the separate districts of Pliska, situated at a certain distance from each other. These were the districts of the common population of farmers, stockbreeders and craftsmen. Thatched huts and dwellings of the dugout type predominated here, at least in the earlier period. But in the course of time larger dwellings, as well as buildings of various workshops, such as potteries, smithies and so on, made their appearance. After the adoption of Christianity in 865, churches began to be built as well. Each district acquired its church, which stood out among the other buildings with its more solid structure and its size. Large monasteries were also built. So far the ruins of over 20 churches have been excavated. A large part of them are of the basilica type.

The district, inhabited by the ruler and the bolyars (nobles), lay in the centre of Pliska. It covered an area of about half a square kilometre, in the form of a trapeze, the sides of which had a total length of 2870 metres. A heavily-built stone fortress, made of big, well-hewn stone blocks, separated the palace of the Khan, the bolyars' houses and public buildings from the rest of the city. Although only the lower part of the fortress walls have been preserved, they still seize the eye of the visitor and amaze him with their rugged strength. They were 2.60 m. thick, and up to 10 m. in height, crowned with huge stone crenellations. There was a gate on each side, defended by square double towers (Fig. 58). Besides these, round towers at the corners and pentagonal towers along the walls further increased the fortress's powers of resistance. This fortified district was in fact the citadel of the settlement. In scientific literature it is usually known as the «Inner City» in contrast to the remaining districts, which formed the «Outer City». The inner city appears to have been very densely built up (Fig. 59). The «Big Palace», which was built upon the ruins of an older and larger palace, burnt down by the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I. in 811, stands out with its spacious halls. The plan of the so-called «Small Palace» is original. A number of other buildings, some of which were built of bricks, are also of interest. All these buildings do not belong to the same period. Different periods of construction have been



noted. The old plan of the pagan temple and its later transformation into a Christian church is clearly apparent in what is known as the Palace Church. There are visible traces of a system of sewage, bathing pools, and some of the buildings had hypocausts — heating installations.

With its central position, the stone architecture of its fortress and its palaces, the inner city occupied a dominating position over the remaining districts. The profound class stratification which had taken place in the Slav-Bulgarian society of that day found its clearest concrete expression in this architectural contrast between the Inner and the Outer City.

One kilometre north-east of the Inner City lie the ruins of the Great Basilica. This is indeed one of the most monumental buildings in Pliska. It is 29 m. wide and its total length, including the church with a nave aisles and three apses, a double narthex and a spacious atrium with a colonnade, is 99 m. The basilica dates back to the second half of the 9th century.

We possess many valuable written records of the great construction which took place in the Bulgarian kingdom in the 9th century, and particularly in the reign of Khan Omourtag — the inscriptions on the columns or square blocks, which the Chancellery of the Bulgarian Khanate left as documentary archives on all events of greater importance, in the reign of one or another of the Khans. These inscriptions, the number of which is already considerable — something about 50 — provide information about the wars waged, the peace treaties signed by the Bulgarian kingdom with its neighbours, the building enterprises, and so on. The Chatalar inscription, found at the village of Tsar Kroum (Chatalar), near Preslav, tells that Omourtag, living in Pliska, built a bridge over the River Ticha, and a palace which he decorated with four columns, upon which two lions were placed. The Turnovo inscription (now in the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Turnovo) tells us that Omourtag built another palace on the Danube, and put up a big mausoleum halfway between the Danube and the camp of Pliska. One of the biggest and most detailed inscriptions was the chronicle-inscription around the rupestrial relief of the Horseman at the village of Madara, Kolarovgrad district, known as the Horseman of Madara; this inscription recorded the most important events in the reigns of the first Bulgarian Khans. Unfortunately the inscriptions are badly damaged. Several words can be deciphered with certainty, among them the names of certain Bulgarian Khans. Only the stone relief, cut upon the perpendicular cliff, at a height of about 20 m. from its foot, is in a better state of preservation (Fig. 60). It depicts a hunting scene — a horseman, followed by his dog, and beneath the horse a lion, pierced by a short spear. The figures are almost life size. In spite of this, however, the relief is almost lost in the mass of the cliff, when it is looked at from a distance. One has to come up to the foot of



the cliffs, and wait for the moment in which the sun's rays fall on it slanting from the west, to feel the volume and the monumental quality of this relief.

Madara is one of the most picturesque places in North-East Bulgaria, a marvellous combination of the beauties of nature. The high plateau ends in a straight cliff to the north, forming an abyss over 100 metres deep. There are huge caves at the foot of the cliff, and numerous springs. Conditions were favourable here for man to settle even in pre-historic times. From that day to this the site has been inhabited without interruption. Numerous remains of different cultures of all historical periods have accumulated. We find remains of the Eneolithic Age, and of the Iron Age too. The remains of a big Roman villa were found, quite low, at the approaches to the cliff. There was an old Thracian shrine under the big cave around the springs, in which votive tablets of the Thracian Horseman were found, and of other deities also. The ruins of buildings of the Bulgarian Middle Ages are of particular interest, however. Some of them date back to the period before the conversion of the Bulgarians to Christianity. An extensive conglomeration of buildings is visible not far from the foot of the cliff, on which the relief has been cut. Some think that this was Omourtag's palace; another group of buildings is considered by some to have been a pagan temple, and by others — a second palace. In general, much is not yet clear about the use to which the buildings excavated at Madara and belonging to the period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom were put. Madara is also known for its fortress, which rose on the crest of the perpendicular cliffs. The fortress walls trace the slanting sides of a triangle, the third side of which was formed by the edge of the cliff. This side was not fortified with a wall, because the fortress was entirely inaccessible on that side. The walls were built of rectangular stone blocks of different sizes. The fortress gate was defended by two pentagonal towers and there was a big square tower at one corner. The Madara Fortress probably existed before the proto-Bulgarians settled in this region. But because of its strategic situation it played an important part during the entire medieval history of the Bulgarian people, until they fell under Ottoman domination.

Diggings in the two necropolises around Madara also yielded interesting finds. A particularly large amount of jewelry was found here, among which there were two belt ornaments, which are attributed to the toreutic art of the Slav-Bulgarians (Fig. 61). No less interesting are the finds, chiefly pottery, at the necropolis near Novi Pazar (Fig. 62), which also belongs to the period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom.

The region of Kolarovgrad provided a most important find in recent years — a settlement of the type of Pliska was found at the village of Tsar Kroum (Chatalar) not far from Preslav. This is the place where the column with the inscription of Omourtag's day, mentioned above, was found. The main resemblance to Pliska lies in the fact that



we have here an outer earthen fortification, although on a far smaller scale than that of Pliska (515 x 405 m.), and an inner stone fortress measuring 110 x 93 m. This may have been the palace, the military camp, which Omourtag built and ornamented with columns and the statues of two lions, as the Chatalar Column mentions.

A most important document has come down to us from the period of the greatest flowering and prosperity attained by the medieval Bulgarian state at the end of the 9th and in the 10th century: John the Exarch's Hexameron. Here we find a most interesting description of Preslav, the second capital of the First Bulgarian State: «When a peasant, a poor man and a stranger, cometh from afar to the towers of the Royal Citadel (the Inner City) and perceiveth them, he is filled with amazement. And when he advanceth to the gate, he marvelleth and asketh, and upon entering within he perceiveth on both sides large buildings of stone, and ornamented with wood and other materials. When he entereth the Royal Palace and perceiveth all buildings and churches, decorated with stones, wood and paintings, and within with marble and copper, silver and gold, he knoweth not wherewith to compare them, for that he hath not seen such a thing in his land, except thatched huts — and the poor peasant loseth his mind in wonder.»

Excavations at Preslav, particularly in the last few years, have not only confirmed the truth of this description, but supplemented it as well. To this day, the monumental foundations of the royal palace still stand forth among the numerous ruins in Preslav; it was built of large, well-hewn stone blocks (Fig. 63). The ruins of a 10th century church, highly original in plan, are also visible; it consists of a rotunda, a narthex and an atrium, the wall surfaces of which were highly broken up (Fig. 64). Its polychromous interior ornamentation, with coloured marbles and wall mosaics on a gold background, and coloured faience tiling (Figs. 65 & 67), harmoniously supplemented the rich variety of wonderfully light and ethereal forms of the interior.

With regard to plan, Preslav followed the town-planning principles applied in Pliska. Here too the «Inner City» was separated from the «Outer City» by strongly fortified walls, which defended the royal district. However, the «Outer City» was not fortified with a moat and earthworks as at Pliska, but with a thick fortress wall, which surrounded an area of only about 3.5 square kilometres. Moreover, the fortress wall most certainly did not surround the entire «Outer City». On the contrary, the major part of it, which lay to the east, on the other bank of the River Ticha, was not fortified at all. Preslav occupied barely half the area of Pliska. As in Pliska the «Outer City» included the districts inhabited by the common population of craftsmen and farmers, and separate estates owned by feudal lords and the higher clergy. In the spacious outer city monasteries and bolyar churches were found, remarkable for the richness of their interior decoration.



Preslav was a centre of production. It was well known for the highly artistic painted ceramics (Fig. 66) it produced, which were chiefly used as decorative facing for buildings or for the expensive floors of the bolyar churches, etc. (Fig. 67). The greatest variety of vessels of lovely and original forms, exquisitely decorated in a number of gay colours, was made in Preslav (Figs. 68 & 70).

Excavations carried out here in the last few years have brought to light a large amount of material, which reveals in its entirety the high level of culture created by the Bulgarian people in the early Middle Ages (Figs. 69 & 71). In the 10th century Preslav was not only the chief administrative centre in the Bulgarian kingdom, it was also an industrial and commercial centre. It was the centre of the intellectual life in Bulgaria of that day. An interesting epigraphic monument dates back to the last years of Preslav's prosperity — the tombstone of Mostich, one of the foremost nobles at the court of the Kings Simeon and Peter.

In 1018, after a desperate resistance, the Bulgarian state was conquered by the Byzantines. For over 150 years they dominated the country. There were practically no conditions at that time for the development of an original Bulgarian culture and art. Nevertheless, certain buildings were erected in the country at that time (Fig. 72), some of which though not Bulgarian, are of great artistic and historical importance in general. One of them is the mausoleum church at the Monastery of Bachkovo with its murals. The Monastery of Bachkovo was founded in 1083 by Gregory Pakourian, a Georgian by birth, and a Byzantine general. He chose one of the most picturesque spots in the Rhodopes for his monastery, about 30 km. south of Plovdiv in the valley of the River Chaya. Of the original monastery buildings only Pakourian's two-storied family vault and chapel has been preserved; it stood 300 m. outside the monastery itself. Frescoes painted at the end of the 11th, and the middle of the 12th century have been preserved here. There are also some 14th century frescoes. The frescoes of the first two periods are of particular value, and are at the moment some of the most important examples of Byzantine monumental painting in the period of the Comnenes. Among the 14th century murals there is an important portrait of Ivan Alexander, which is, however, badly damaged. We have almost no idea as to the development of Bulgarian painting during the Byzantine rule. The oldest murals in the Boyana Church and the remains of the older wallpaintings in the Church of St. George in Sofia, which are usually dated back to the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century, are so fragmentary and badly preserved that no essential conclusions can be drawn from them. Far more monuments of medieval Bulgarian architecture and art have been preserved within the frontiers of present day Bulgaria of the period of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.

Naturally, after Bulgaria's liberation from Byzantine domination in 1186, far more favourable conditions were created for the development of culture and art. Turnovo, the capital of the Second Bul-



garian Kingdom, situated at the foot of the two inaccessible hills of Tsarevets and Trapezitsa, girded by the sharp bends of the River Yantra, became a powerful stronghold, the seat of a ruler and the principal centre of medieval Bulgarian culture. It is linked with the brightest and most tragic events in the history of the Bulgarian people in the second half of the Middle Ages. Here, a revolt of the whole people against Byzantine rule broke out in 1186, headed by the brother nobles Assen and Peter. As the capital of the newly-liberated Bulgarian kingdom Turnovo became the centre of the Bulgarian culture. The city witnessed the great cultural advance of the Bulgarian people in the 13th and 14th centuries. A school of painting came into being here, the influence of which was felt all over the Bulgarian lands. The Monastery of Kilifarevo about 20 km. from Turnovo, was an important centre of scholarship in the 14th century, the scholars trained here being remarkable for that day. Turnovo witnessed the people's struggles against foreign invaders, and against their own masters, the feudal lords. Amid the storms of feudal internecine wars, which shook the state to its foundations and exhausted the people's forces, Turnovo opened its gates to the Bulgarian peasants who rebelled in the 13th century, and saw Ivailo, the people's hero and leader of this big peasant revolt, take his seat on the hereditary throne of the Bulgarian kings. Turnovo was the last city to resist the Ottoman conquerors at the end of the 14th century, and perished in fire and flames together with the Bulgarian kingdom, putting an end to a chapter in the history of the Bulgarian people, and ushering in the history of its five centuries of bondage.

Little has come down to us of royal Turnovo's glorious past. Much has also been destroyed by time. Until quite recently only the ruins of the walls of Tsarevets and three churches in the old city were known of the old Turnovo: St. Dimiter, where the revolt was proclaimed, the Church of the Forty Martyrs, built by Ivan Assen II in 1230 to commemorate the Bulgarians' great victory over the Byzantines at Klokochnitsa, and the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul built in the 14th century, which suffered severely in the earthquake in 1913. This earthquake did not spare the only three 14th century houses, preserved up to that time, one of which, in particular, called Madame Boika's House, was of great interest for the study of private dwellings in Medieval Bulgaria. Excavations were made on the Trapezitsa Hill in 1900, where the foundations of 17 churches were discovered. Traces of plastering show that the churches were richly ornamented with murals. After a long pause, systematic excavations were at last begun in recent years on the Tsarevets Hill, which have thrown fresh light on the architecture and culture of the medieval Bulgarian capital. Tsarevets was the most inaccessible part of the town. The royal residence was here, with the natural protection afforded by the River Yantra, which surrounded it on almost all sides at the foot of the hill, and by the steep rocks, almost perpendicular in places. Up on the narrow ledge above the abyss



rose stone walls with towers. The buildings which formed the royal residence were situated on several consecutive terraces. The palace gate was on the lowest of these, and was strongly protected by towers; through it one passed into a small courtyard where there were various buildings, some of which were dwellings, and a large reservoir which must have held about 100 cubic metres of water. On the next somewhat higher terrace there was a big ceremonial hall divided into three by two colonnades, and a small palace chapel. Remains of numerous columns with Attic bases and Ionian capitals show that wide use had been made of building and decorative material from the ruins of the antique city Nicopolis ad Istrum, near by. Other palace buildings are found on the third terrace. Most valuable and interesting material was found in clearing away the high embankment formed by the ruins, which covered the remains of the palace. There is a particularly large number of sherds of richly ornamented glazed pottery (Fig. 89). Numerous coins of the 12—14th century were found, and in the graves around the palace church valuable jewelry came to light, such as the gold sections of a belt, as well as well preserved pieces of richly ornamented cloth of gold garments. Part of the slab which covered a royal tomb shows in relief the lower part of the buried king's body with the insignia of the royal family.

Thus the castle of the Assenids is gradually emerging from among the ruins; it lay on the highest point of the hill and from there protected the capital.

There was much building of fortresses in the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. To this day the ruins of old feudal castles stand on the higher approaches of mountain passes. With the exception of the fortified walls and the churches, all else appears to have been lightly built, and therefore easily perished under the action of time and when the country was ravaged by its enemies.

At one of the loveliest spots along the road to the Bachkovo Monastery, to the south of Assenovgrad, in the Assenova Krepost or Fortress, the Church of the Holy Virgin of Petrich, dating back to the 12th or early 13th century (Fig. 73), has thrust its foundations into the perpendicular rocks of a high peak. Of the fortress itself, which was only accessible from one spot, insignificant traces have remained. Only the church now stands on the very edge of the rock. It is of the type of the two-storey mausoleum churches, though it is not possible to assert that its lower floor was intended for use as a fortress. A wooden staircase led to the upper story. To the east it ends in a five-walled apse, and to the west in a narthex. In the middle of the longitudinal cylindrical vault of the nave there is a cupola, which rests on four arches supported by quadrilateral pilasters. Above the narthex there is a square belfry. The southern wall of the second floor is decoratively divided by seven arched niches. Two of them are included in a big arch which, giving height to the roof with the tip of its pediment thus stres-



ses the side cupola arches of the church. The church of Assenova Krepost is in every respect an extremely original architectural monument. Some of its elements may be due to certain eastern influences, but as a whole it is a work of local creative construction.

The Church of Boyana is no less original a monument; it lies at a distance of 8 km. to the south of Sofia, at the foot of Mount Vitosha (Fig. 74). This is a bolyar's church too, but it was built outside the fortress, which rose upon a high rock above the spot where the Boyana brook flows out of its gully. A small cruciform cupolaed church had been built on the estate of the feudal lord here as early as the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century. It had no free supports and was covered with murals. In 1259, the local bolyar, Sebastokrator Kaloyan, added a two-storeyed part to the original church, a vault below and a church with a cupola above; this had a door on the south wall, reached by a wooden staircase. Although built at two different periods the architect of the second church has combined the two buildings with such skill that they now form an indivisible whole, linked with the harmony of measured lines and the most simplified stereometric forms, lightly arranged one next to the other or one above the other. The mountain to the south, and the spacious horizon of the sky to the north form a natural background against which the silhouette of the church stands out picturesquely. Inside, the Boyana Church houses some of the loveliest work of Old Bulgarian art. The murals which decorate it were painted in the 13th century, and are distinguished by their refreshing realism. Here we have the portraits of the donors Sebastokrator Kaloyan and his wife Dessislava (Figs. 75 & 76), and of King Konstantin Tih, the reigning monarch, and his Queen Irina. The faces are painted with a masterly skill, which gives a true idea of the character of the sitters. In the portraits of saints, the emaciated and ascetic images have made way for those of real living people, such as the artist who decorated the church saw around him every day. He was a great master of the art of depicting profoundly psychological moments. The picture of Jesus among the doctors (Figs. 77 & 78), Christ Evergetes, the image of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross and the faces in a number of other compositions are unique (Fig. 79).

Boyana is eloquent enough proof of the great advance recorded by the Turnovo School of Painting with its realistic trend in the 13th century. This advance reached its zenith, however, in the 14th century, in the reign of King Ivan Alexander who, as a true humanist, attracted artists and scholars to his Court in Turnovo. A school of miniature painters was hard at work here. They illuminated gospels, chronicles and other books which were translated and copied. The miniaturists who illuminated the Curzon Bible (now in the British Museum, London) worked here. This bible was copied and illuminated in 1356, by order of Ivan Alexander (Fig. 80). The miniatures in the Chronicle of Manasses were also the work of this School, and it too was translated from the



Greek and illuminated by order of Ivan Alexander in 1345. The Bulgarian translation of this Chronicle was however, considerably supplemented by short data on events in the history of Bulgaria, which do not exist in the Greek original, and the story of the Trojan war was also interpolated at the same time. This interest in the antique and in the national was a characteristic trait in the development of Bulgarian culture at the end of the 14th century. It was a manifestation of a true Renaissance spirit, of true humanism, which was widespread in the European world of that day.

The manifestations of this Renaissance, the penetration and revival of interest in antiquity, the striving to bring contemporary art closer to it, are plainly visible in the murals of one of the rupestrial churches near the village of Ivanovo, Roussé district. The River Roussenski Lom, cutting deep into the soft limestone rocks, has formed a wide canyon here, surrounded by walls up to 50 m. in height. Many caves were formed in these almost perpendicular rocks, and in the 13th and 14th centuries entire colonies of monks and hermits took refuge in them, enlarging the natural caves, and adapting them to use as cells or churches. In these rock cells, chapels and churches inhabited by Hezychasts and mystics who had given up life, far from the centres of cultural life, an art made its way, the votaries of which had a totally different attitude to the reality around them. They sought this reality, they tried to attain it and recreate it in their work. This was the art of people who knew how to enjoy life, all that nature, and man in the first place, has created. So man appears in these murals not only in the person of biblical characters with their garments and poses painted according to the strict canons of church painting, but chiefly as a living natural form with his specific dynamics, with his free characteristic and expressive movements. Man's living body appears for the first time partly naked here (some of the servants in the scene of Christ's betrayal), and quite naked in the presentation of the two Atlantes. The bodies are instinct with life and strength. They are not the withered, tortured and powerless bodies we have known so far. The artist who painted the Ivanovo murals was a great artist, and life on earth was closer to his heart than life in paradise after death, the life of which the inhabitants of the rupestrial hermitage above the banks of the Roussenski Lom dreamt and preached. This well-schooled artist was acquainted with classicism and entirely taken up with its new trends in Bulgarian art; he gave full expression to them in his work on the rupestrial church of Ivanovo, where the attempt to return to the aesthetics of antique art are clearly apparent.

Art in West Bulgaria was of a totally different character at that time. Here the influence of the Turnovo school was comparatively slight. It was chiefly masters from the western regions of Bulgaria, from Macedonia, who worked here. Under the influence of their art a local school came into being, which was based on the traditions of a folk art with the



linear and mainly decorative style typical of it, imbued with a sound and fresh, though often naive and primitive, realism. The murals of the Zemen Monastery, 70 km. to the south of Sofia on the road to Radomir, are typical examples of this art. The church is a small cruciform-cupolaed one, with a square foundation, three apses to the east and a cupola on a high drum (Fig. 82). The outer walls are divided into sections by three recessed arches, the central one of which is higher, and they stress the inner structure of the church.

The wallpaintings in the church are well preserved. Of the six portraits of laymen those of Despot Deyan of Kyustendil and Despotitsa Doya are the best preserved. The church was decorated with these frescoes in their day, a little after 1354. They are real individual portraits. Doya has the fine features of a refined *bolyar* beauty. Many details in her costume, of an ethnographic nature, complete the realistic image of this Despotitsa, or Princess. The artist of the Zemen Monastery sought decorative rather than artistic effects in his work. He painted in light colours, with a limited colour scheme in which various shades of ochre predominate. But his force lay in his sure and expressive line. It is grim and rough, but for that very reason it has vigorously delineated the strong well formed features and the big impressive bodies. The faces of the Apostles Peter (Fig. 83) and especially Paul (Fig. 84) are inimitable in that respect. They are the beginnings of a strongly expressive art, which drew its power from folk art, free of the conventions of court academic art, and sought novelty in its surroundings. The realism, which is such a marked feature of many of the compositions in the Zemen murals, is due to this folk art and its aesthetics. It was an art which had certain archaic elements, showing that it had flourished locally for a long time previously. We find it in a number of other monuments of the 14th and 15th century, but we find its style already formed in a number of miniatures as early as the 13th century as is apparent from Father Dobreisho's Bible, for the present the finest example of the folk school of painting, in which Old Bulgarian ornamentation reached its highest development.

The Churches of the Holy Archangels, Pantocrator and St. John Aliturgetos in Nessebur, dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, mark the zenith of church architecture in the Bulgarian lands (Fig. 85). They are comparatively large in size, and interesting both in plan and space treatment. But they are particularly interesting because of the rich ornamentation of their outer walls. These are broken by rows of arched niches, above which there is a frieze of small blind arches, resting upon protruding console stones. Bricks are used as a decorative element by grouping them into different combinations, and so are special small glazed tubes.

Medieval Nessebur was a city of many churches. Today only about ten remain, which have nevertheless left a clear imprint on the aspect of this town. Remnants of murals in some of them show the artistic



value which they must have had. Gifts of icons were also made to them. Some of the finest 14th century icons now in our possession come from Nessebur. Among them an icon representing the Virgin, holding the Infant Jesus in her arms, is of particular interest (Fig. 86). It was presented to one of the Nessebur churches by Ivan Alexander's uncle in 1342. This icon, which is a conventional presentation of the merciful Virgin, was repainted at a later date but is nevertheless of interest. It has a beautifully made silver cover and a metal edging to the veil. This metal cover, as well as certain other old icons known to us, show that the goldsmith's art, and decorative art in general, was highly developed in Medieval Bulgaria. In general, together with monumental art, decorative art in all its branches had reached a very high level and was flourishing. Mention should here be made of the coins, which began to be minted in the reign of Ivan Assen II (1218-1241) and continued down to the time when Bulgaria fell under the domination of the Ottomans (Fig. 88). Mention should also be made of the gold and silver jewelry, ear-rings, bracelets and rings, some of which are distinguished by their particularly fine workmanship (Fig. 87). Of late years, a wealth of medieval jewelry has come to light during the excavations at several medieval necropolises, among which that at the village of Koprinka, in the region of Kazanluk, dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, the Lovech necropolis, dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries, and that of Loukovit, dating back to the 11th to 13th centuries. Numerous graves were found in the last two, quite rich in different pieces of jewelry, such as rings, ear-rings, fragments of garments, segments of iron belts and so on. Our knowledge of medieval pottery in the Bulgarian lands has also been considerably supplemented by the digging done in Turnovo, where large numbers of glazed vessels came to light, with linear ornaments, mostly plant and geometric patterns, among which, however, images of people and animals are not infrequently found (Fig. 89). This pottery was very widespread. It is found in all the old settlements of the 13th and 14 centuries. Much new material has also been recently found in Nessebur. Though in different variants, this pottery was known all over the Eastern medieval world.

The invasion of the Ottomans put an end to the rapid advance in the development of the Bulgarian medieval society. At a time when the Western European peoples were beginning to break the chains of feudalism and religious obscurantism, and when the road to the Renaissance was opening up before them, the dark night of five centuries of political, economic and spiritual bondage fell over the Bulgarian people. The road to their renascence, along which they had already taken the first steps, was barred. But this triple bondage, political, economic and spiritual, was unable to destroy the Bulgarian nationality. The sound cultural traditions of centuries, their glorious past, the past of a creative people, preserved the national consciousness despite the despotism of the Ottomans, which weighed so heavily upon them. In spite of every-



thing, Ottoman bondage was unable to crush the Bulgarian people's creative genius. It only retarded their development by 500 years.

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In 1393 Turnovo, the stubbornly defended capital, fell at last. This was, actually, the end of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, the end of the Bulgarian people's political and cultural independence. The conquest of the country was accompanied by the destruction of flourishing cities, of valuable monuments of the past, and by the slaughter of the most outstanding representatives of the Bulgarian people, who were thus crippled both politically and intellectually. But the medieval Bulgarian culture was first and foremost a folk culture. Fresh creative forces were preserved among the people which, despite the most unfavourable conditions, continued to manifest their life in the forms which the new conditions permitted. The ardent creative fire died down, but there were enough embers left for the fire of Bulgarian creative genius to blaze up again 500 years later.

Memories of the people's past were kept alive in the monasteries. Far from the great highways, usually tucked away in the gorges of inaccessible mountains, they preserved many Bulgarian books, and ancient works were copied and spread wide from here. Some of the finest examples of medieval Bulgarian art were preserved in these monasteries. And lastly new iconographers continued to be taught here, keeping alive the traditions of their predecessors. Iconography developed to a great extent in this period. Together with it, wood carving was given an impetus, and the goldsmiths created beautiful and original ornaments for clothing. The copper and silver articles, mainly for the needs of the church, such as vessels, crosses, clasps and so on for bibles, are distinguished by their extremely fine workmanship. Finally, in the field of weaving and handicrafts, the Bulgarian decorative artist, that is the whole Bulgarian people, created such fine patterns, such decorative motifs as amaze one to this day by their colour scheme, composition and fine craftsmanship.

The only branch of art which decayed greatly was architecture. In the first centuries of bondage the Bulgarians were forbidden to build churches or any kind of monumental building whatever. Only some of the notables, descendants of the old boyar families who had survived, were able to build a small church or monastery here and there, and have it decorated with murals. When the Bulgarians were later once again allowed to build their own churches, the new Christian churches had to be small insignificant buildings, buried deep down in the earth, so as not to irritate the religious feelings of the «orthodox» believers. In full contrast to the small Christian churches huge mosques were now built by the Mohammedans, as well as Caravanserais, and konaks, as the governor's residences or palaces were called. But those



who constructed these Ottoman buildings were again Bulgarian master-builders, who handed down from generation to generation the old feeling of the Bulgarian builder for the monumental. And thanks to this when, in the 19th century, the hour of their National Revival struck for the long-suffering Bulgarian people, and new and more favourable conditions prevailed for building, the first big Bulgarian self-taught architects appeared out of the blue, men like Kolyu Ficheto, who created the first works of modern Bulgarian monumental architecture.

Bulgaria is indeed a country with an eventful history and many ancient and varied monuments. The Bulgarian people found a rich cultural and artistic heritage in the lands in which they settled 13 centuries ago. In the course of over one thousand years they created their own original art, enriching the treasurehouse of mankind's culture by many works of art. Much has been destroyed, by time and by the enemies of the Bulgarian people as well. But much has also remained, for the preservation of which the Bulgarian state does a great deal. The numerous museums which have been founded of recent years in different towns of the Republic, wherever large scale excavation is in progress, have turned into real treasure-houses of archaeological, historical and artistic monuments. But how many buried cities, how many rich treasures and valuable material still lie hidden in the Bulgarian land! In Bulgaria people in all walks of life take an unusual interest in the past of their country. The Bulgarian people highly value and preserve their monuments of the past. They also value and admire the monuments of all other peoples.



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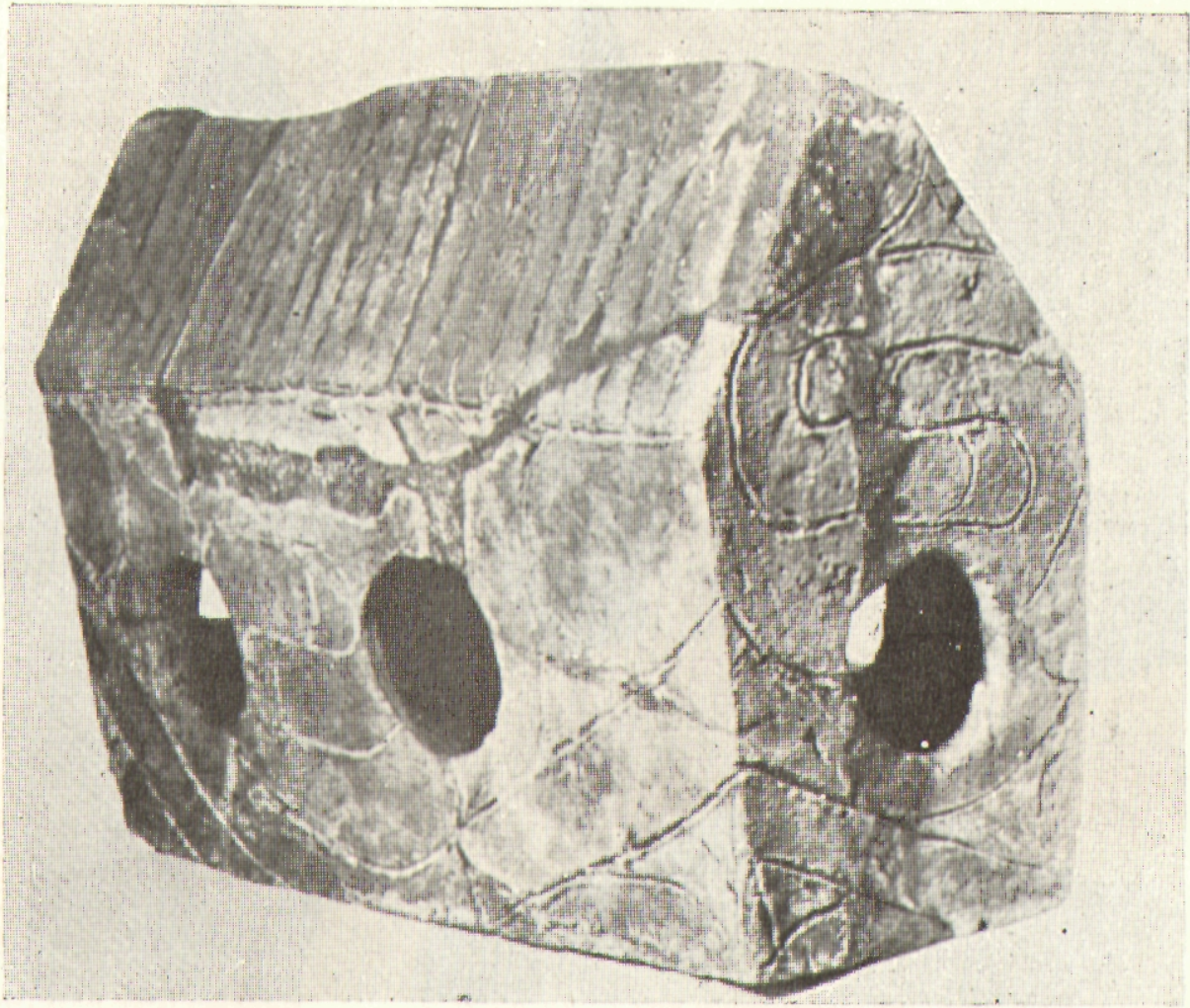


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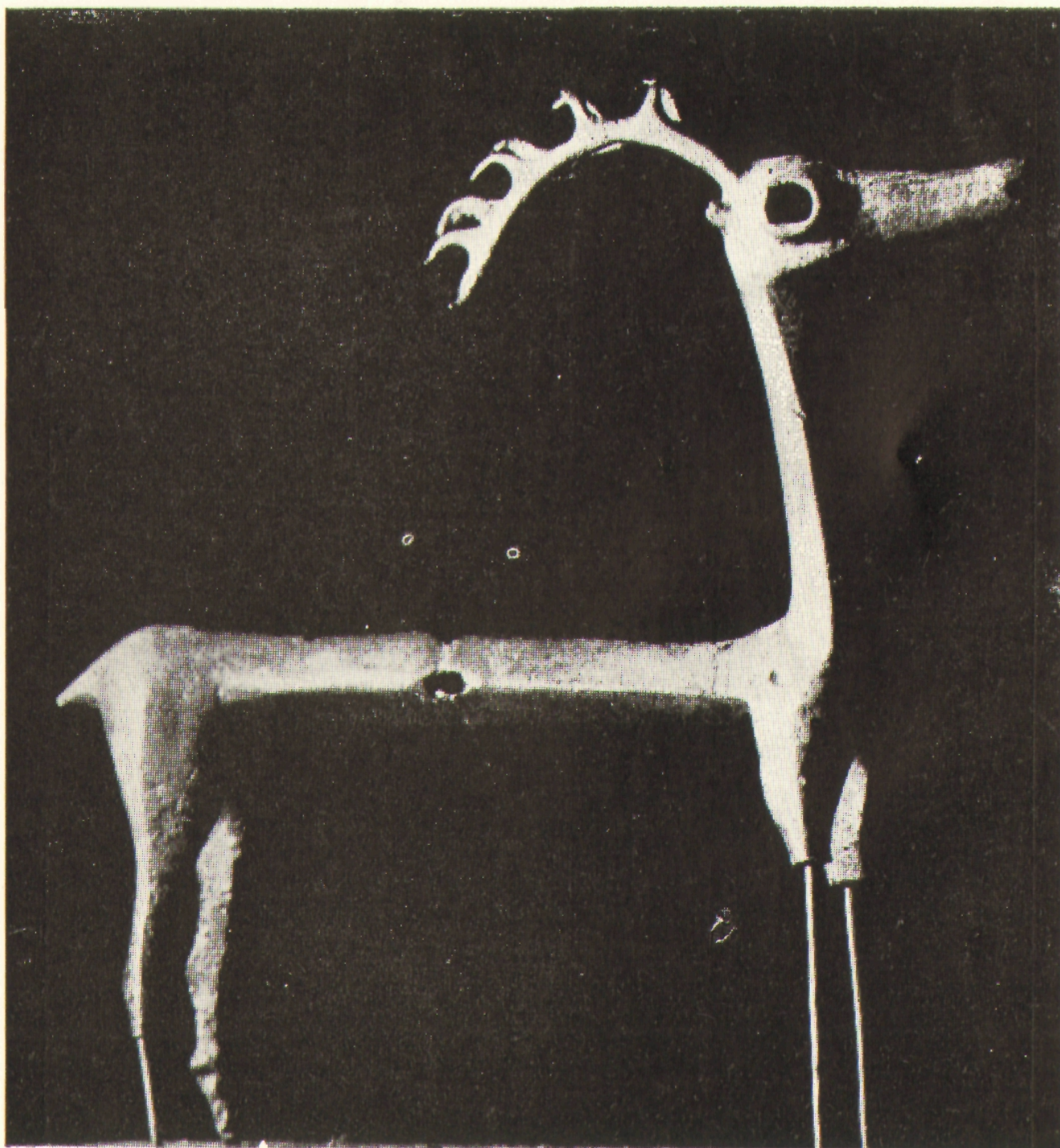
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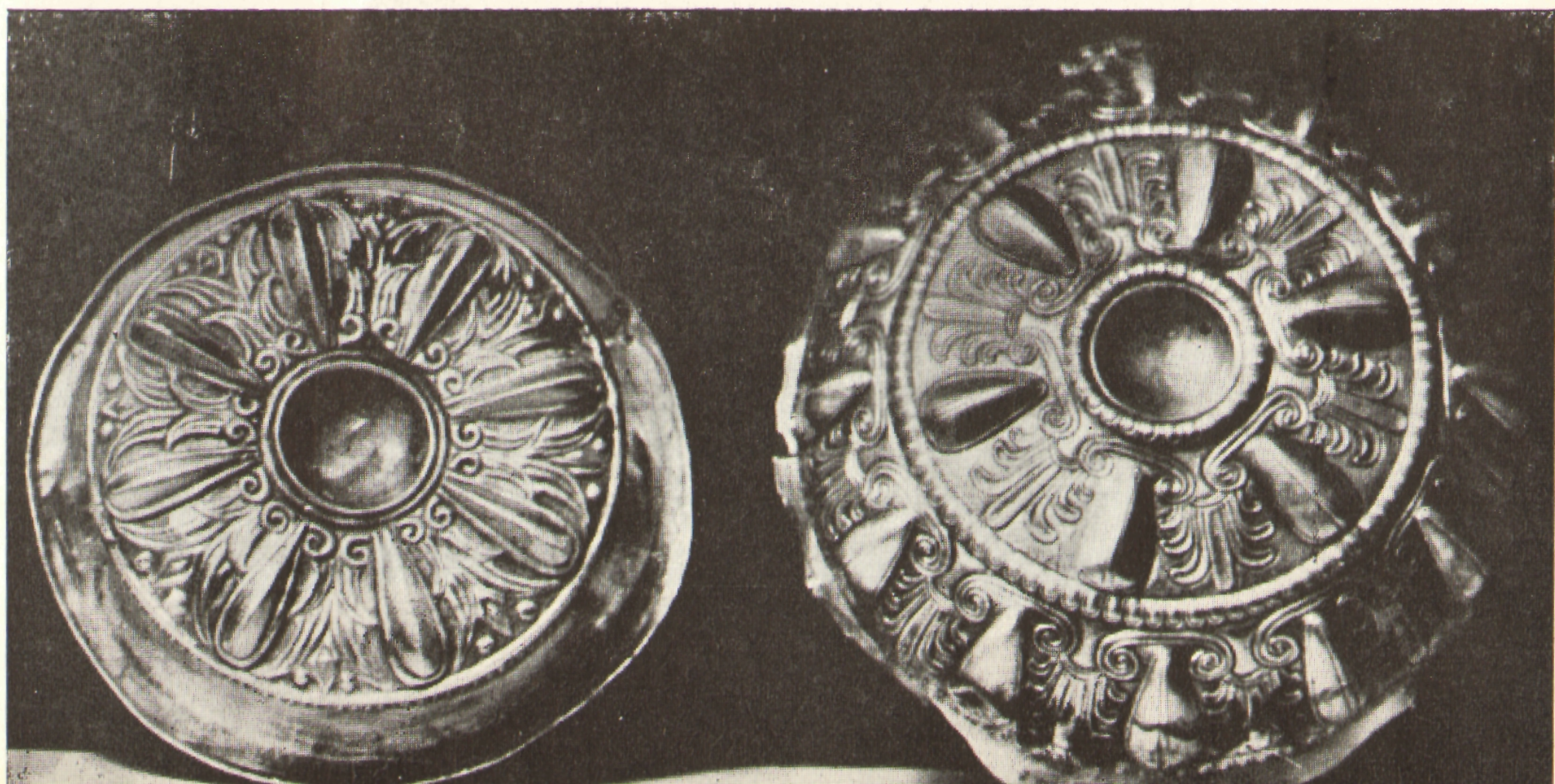






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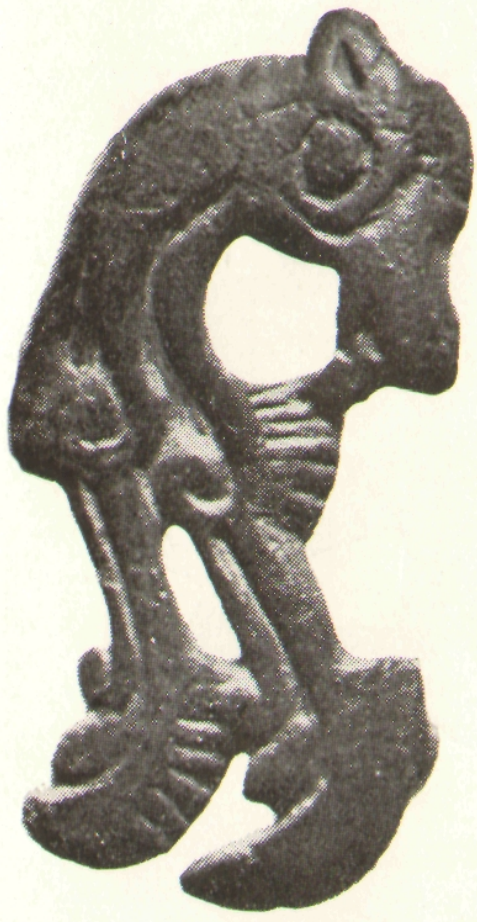


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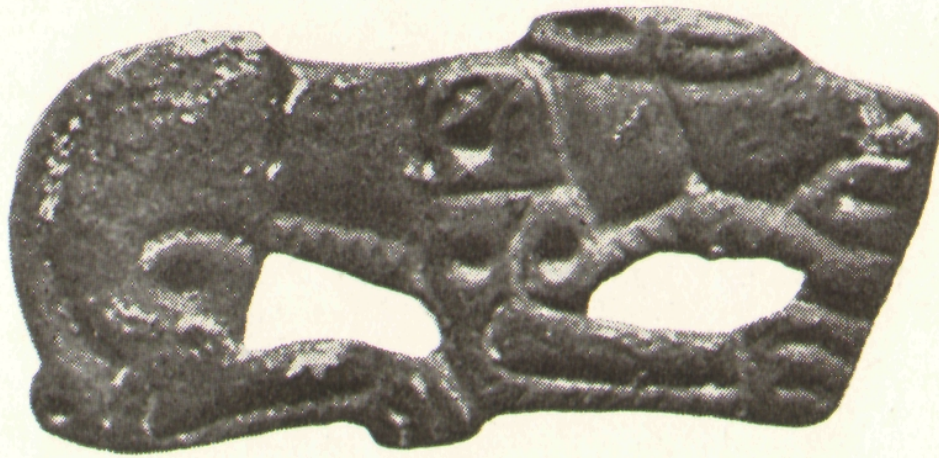


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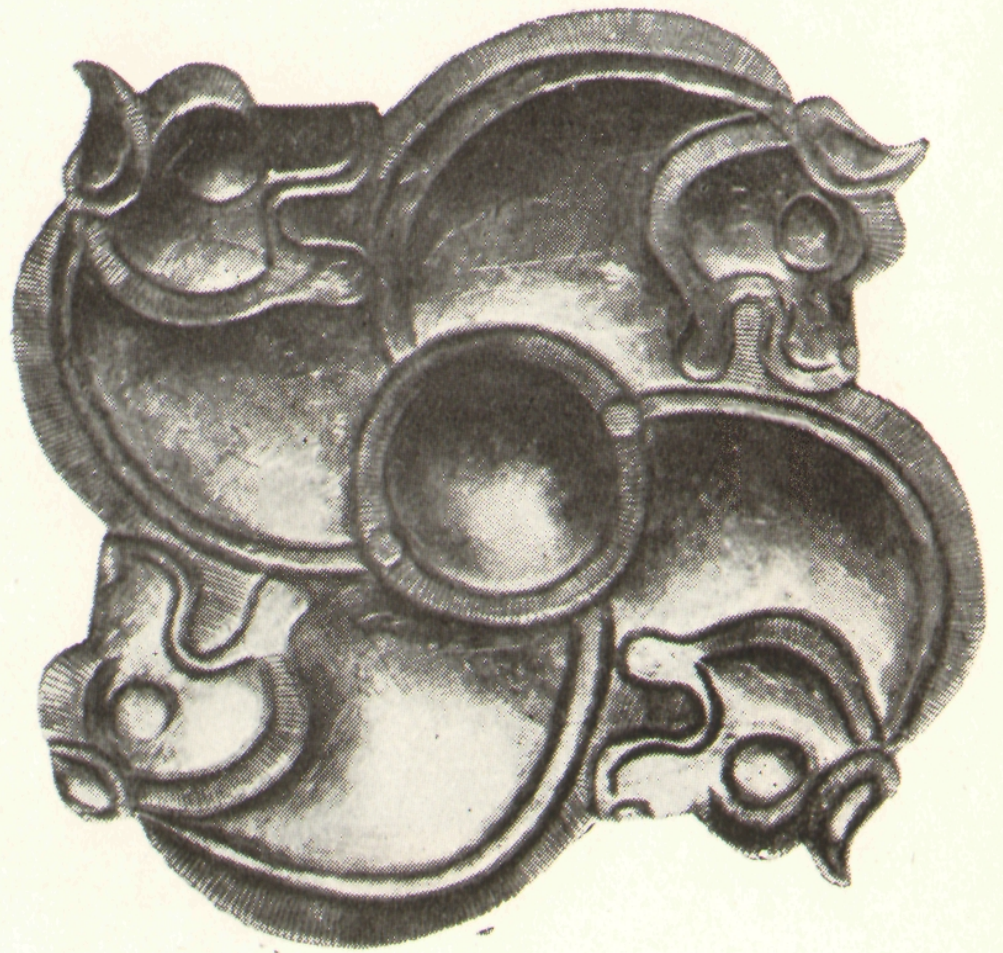




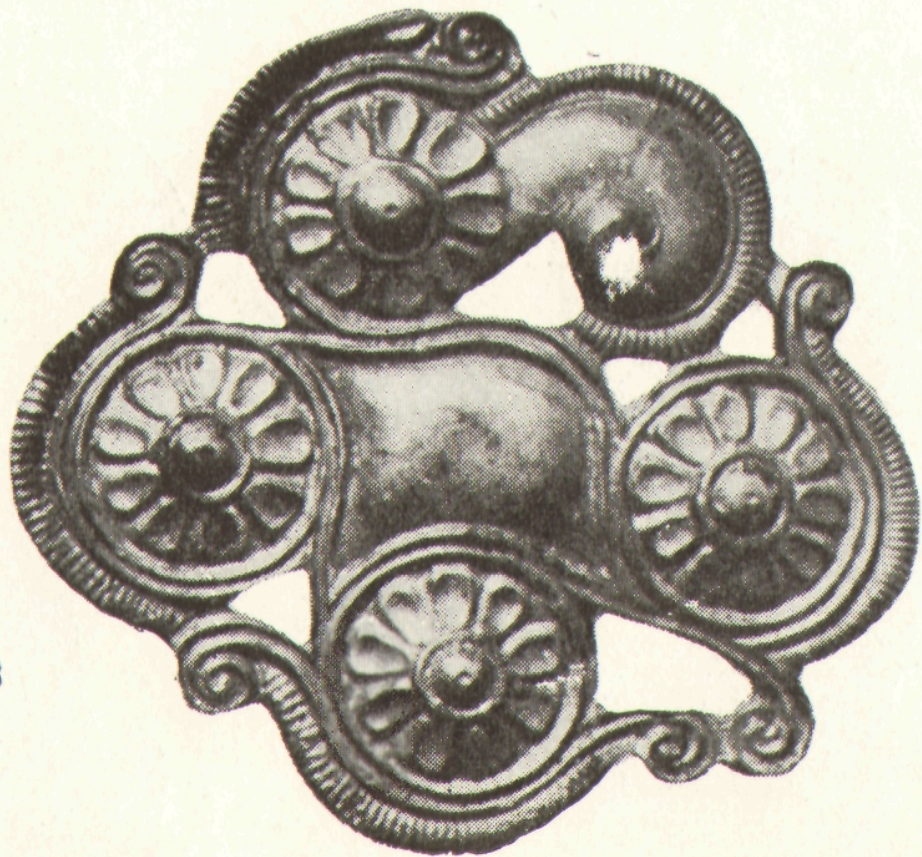
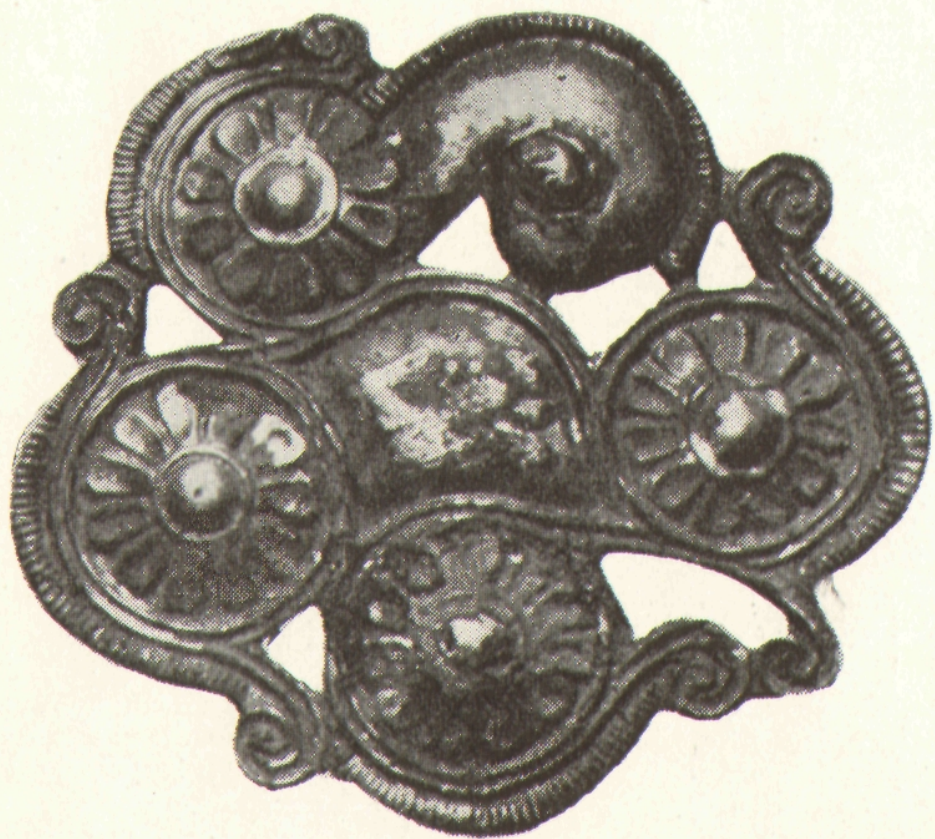
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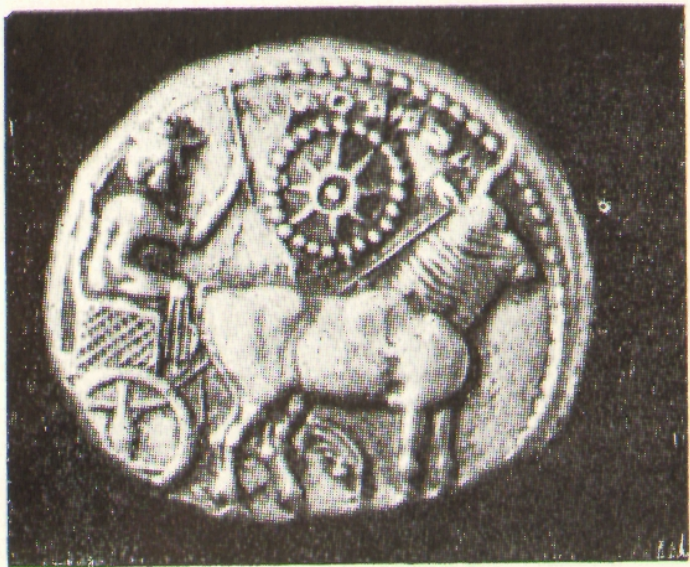


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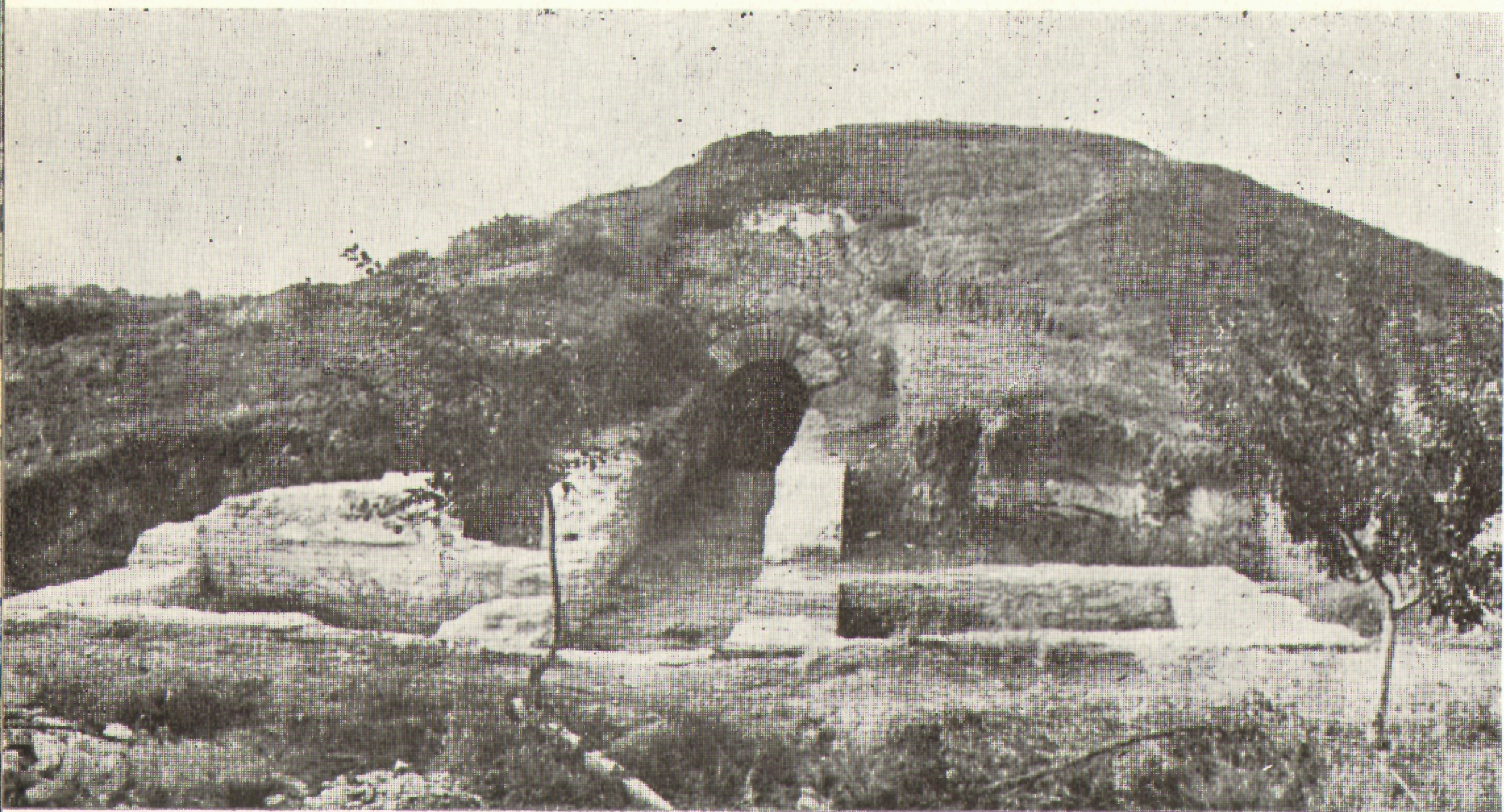






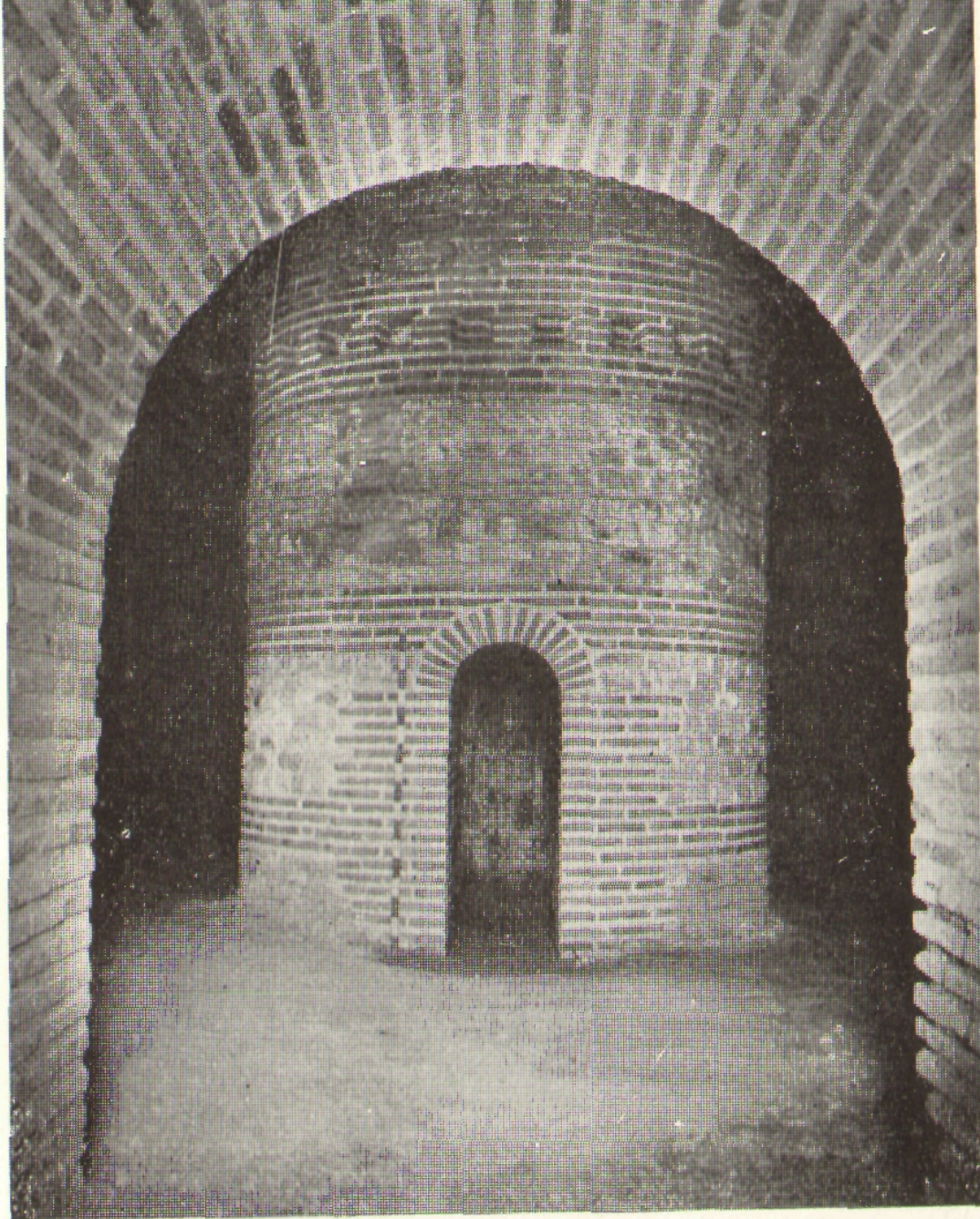


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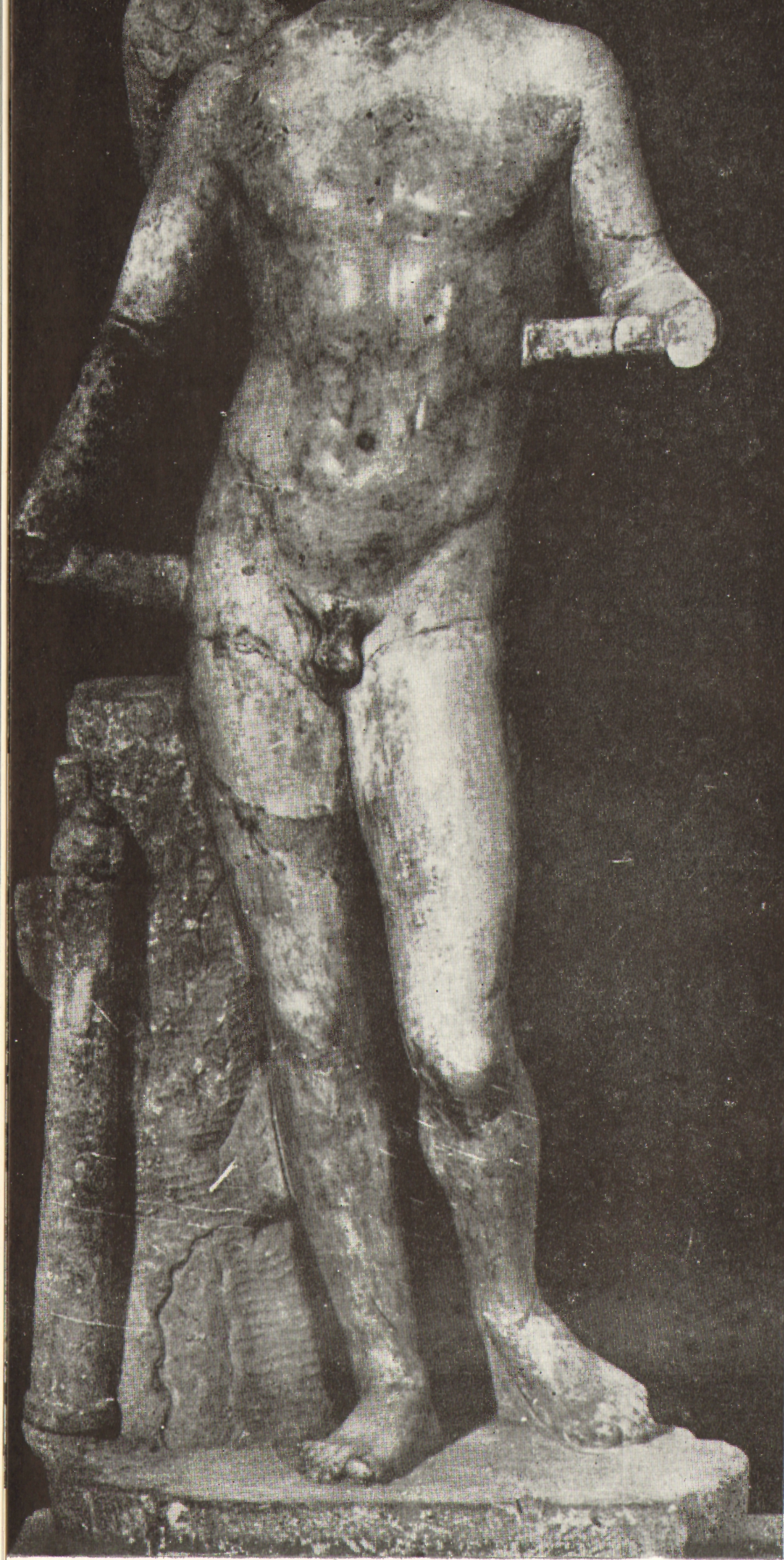


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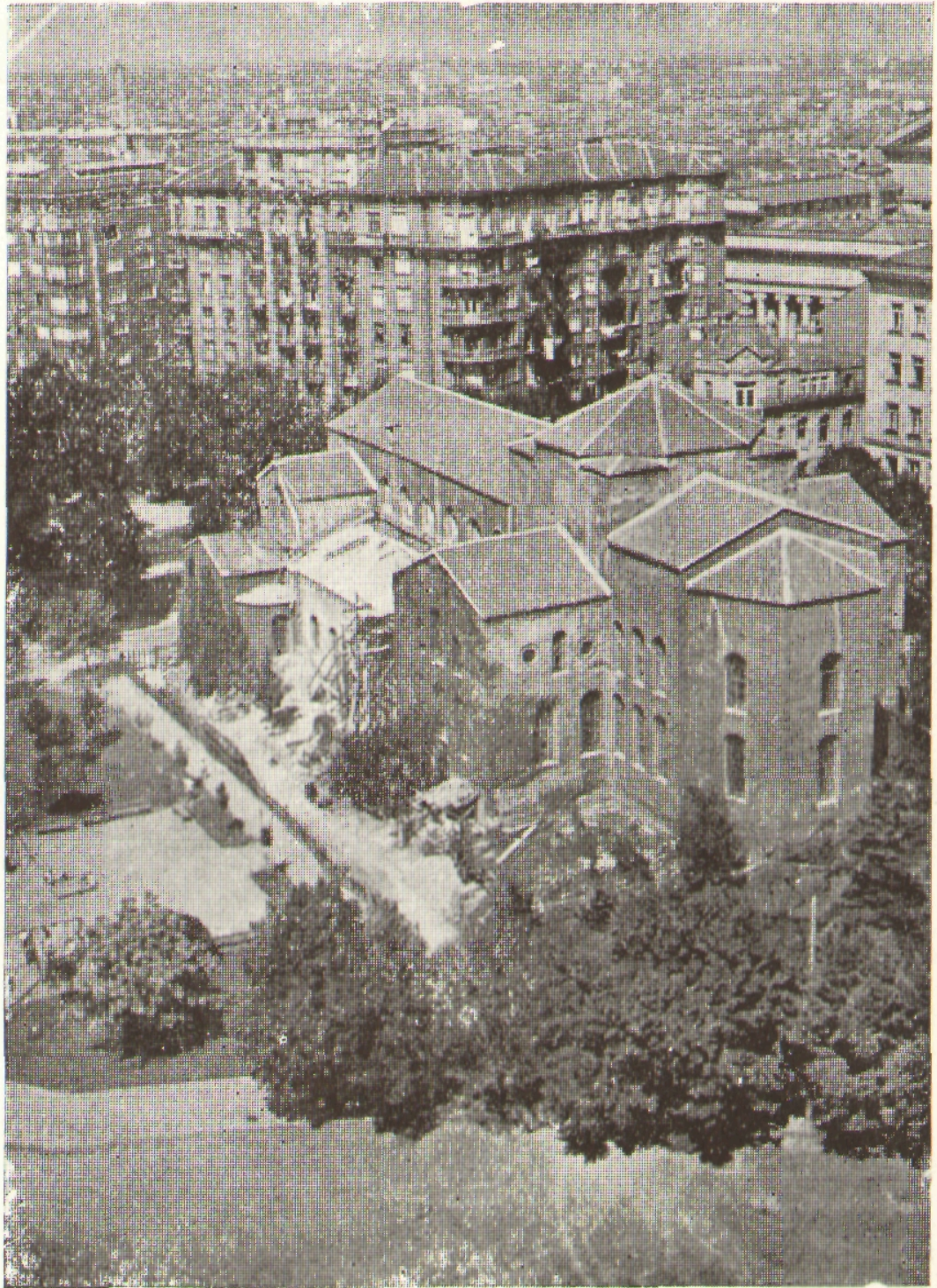
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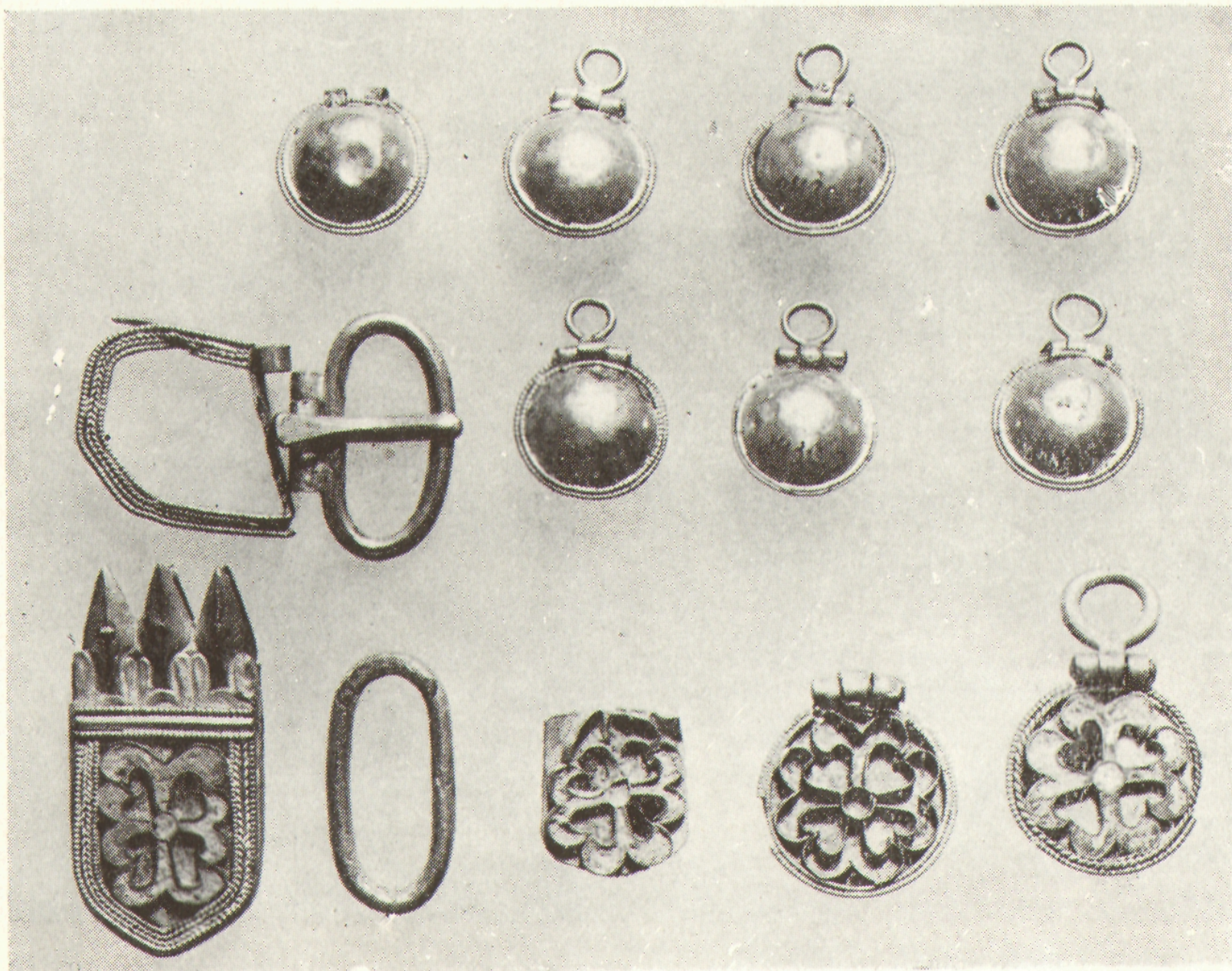


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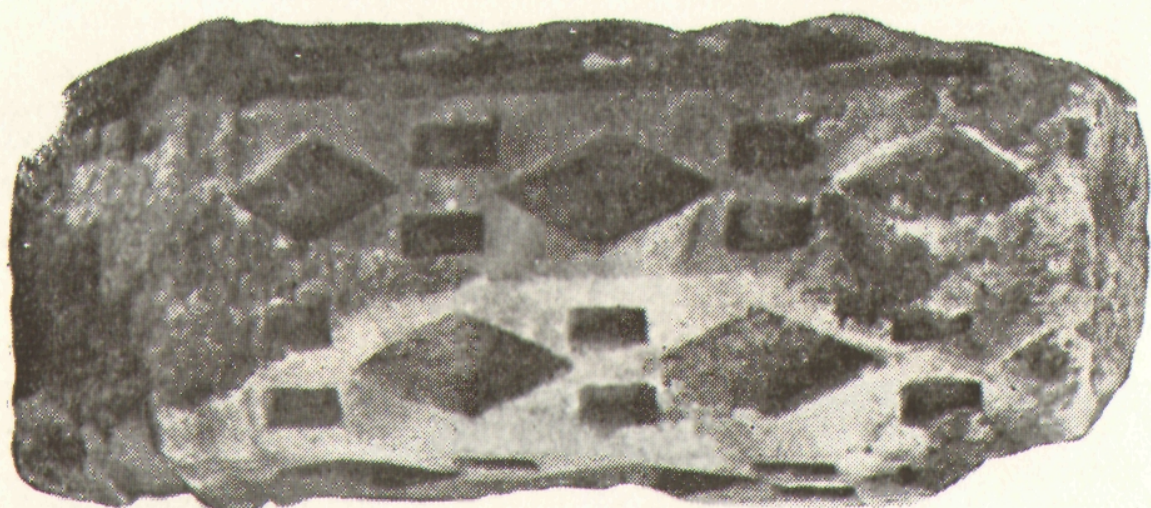
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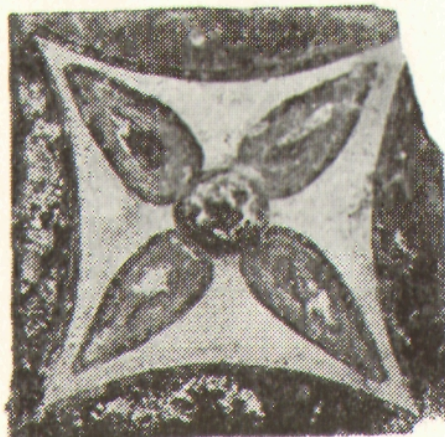
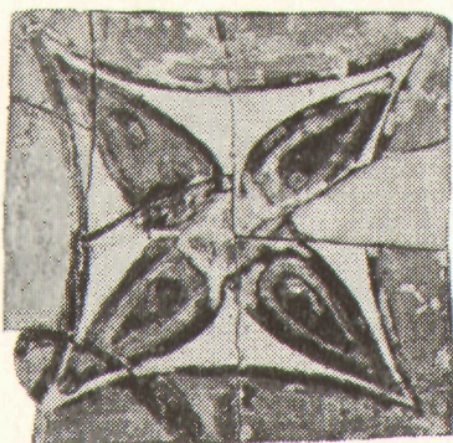
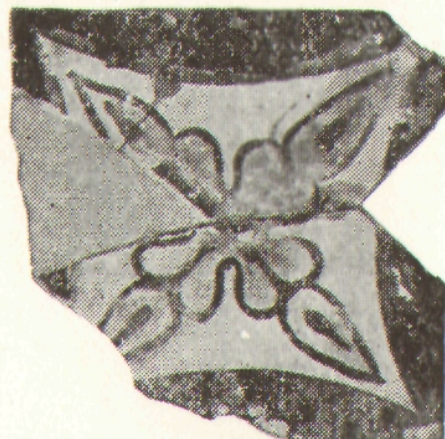
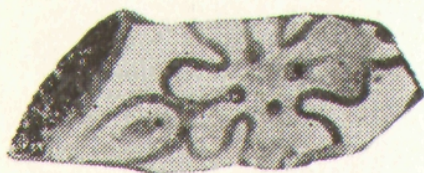
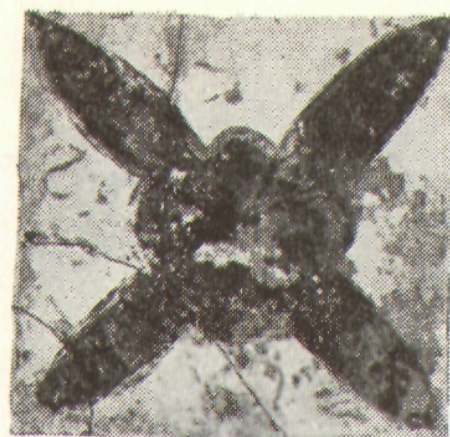
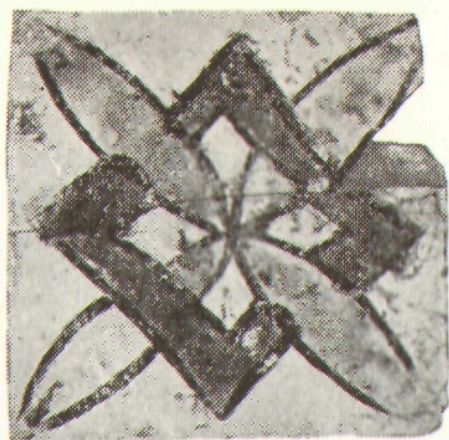
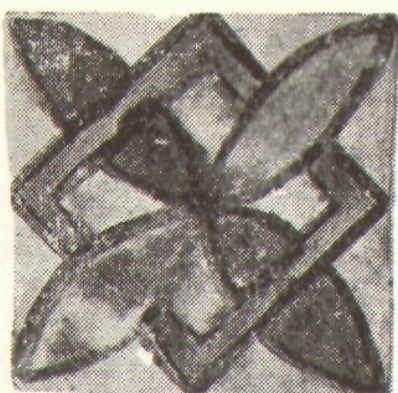




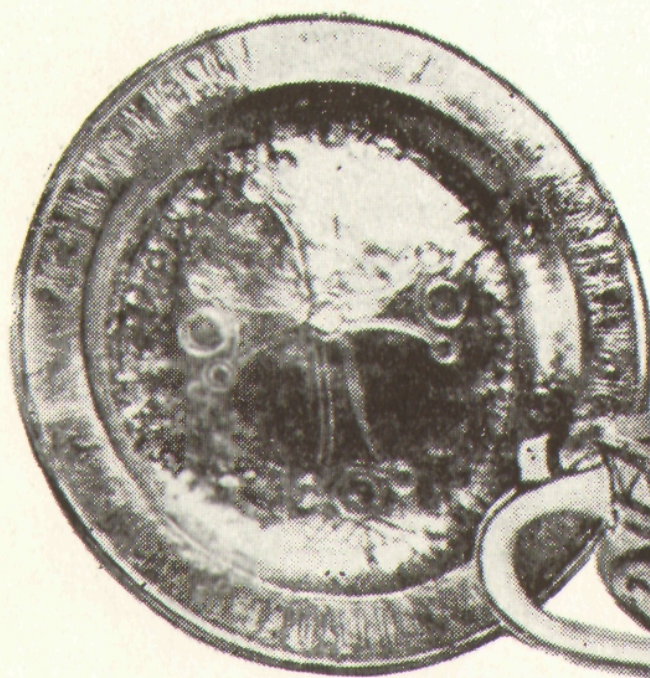




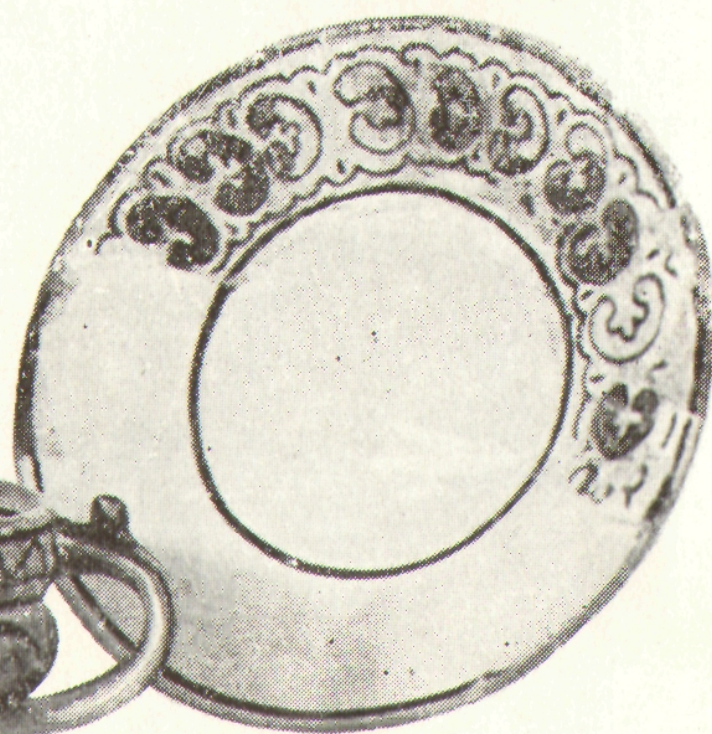




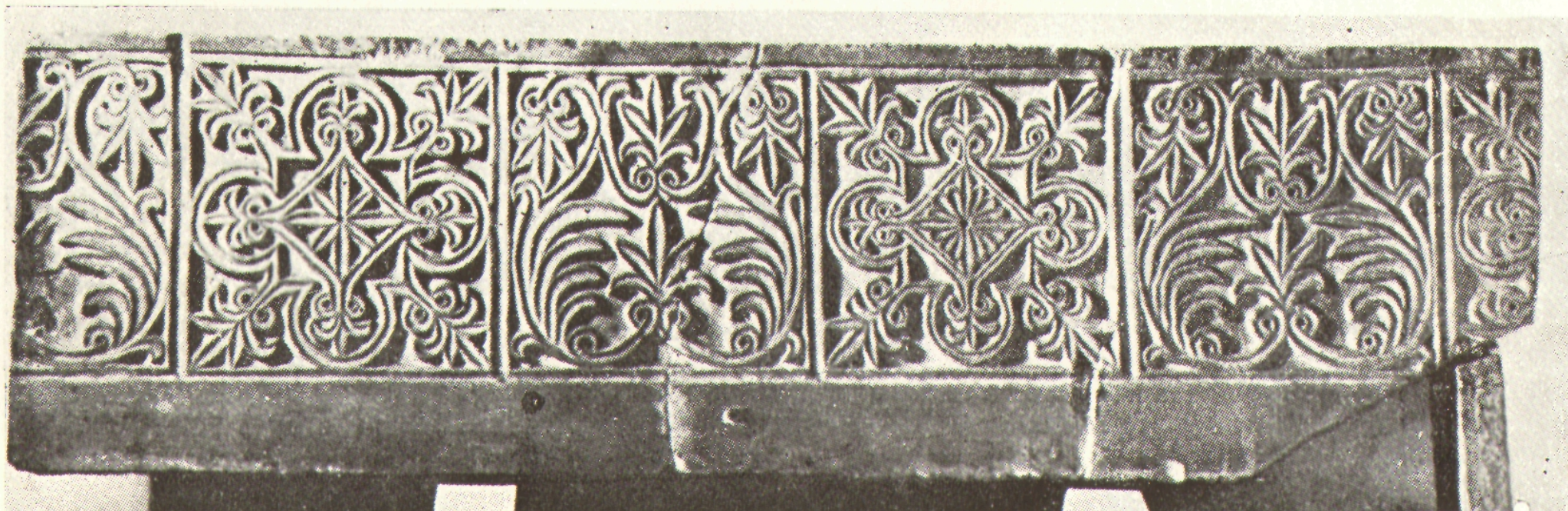
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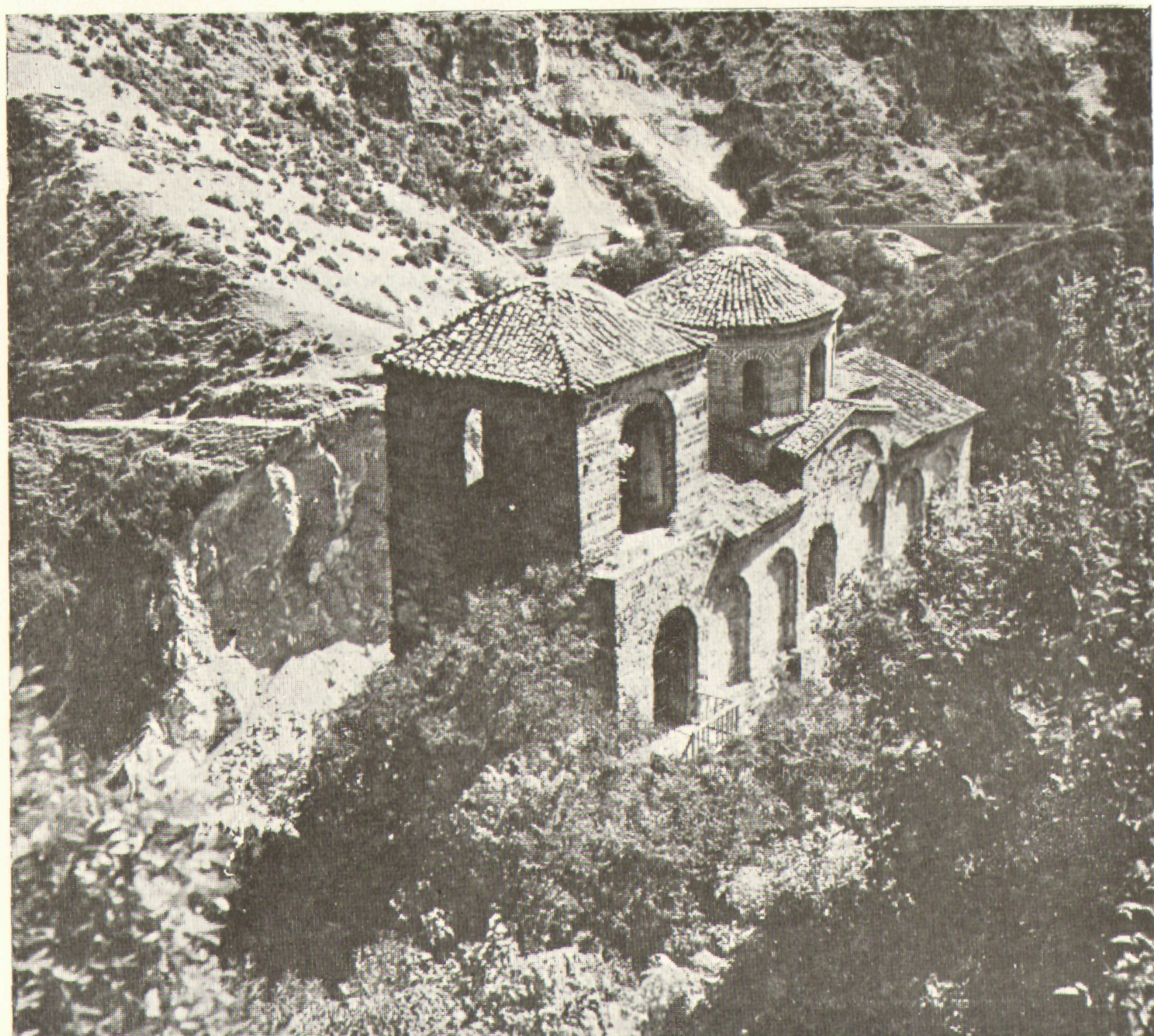






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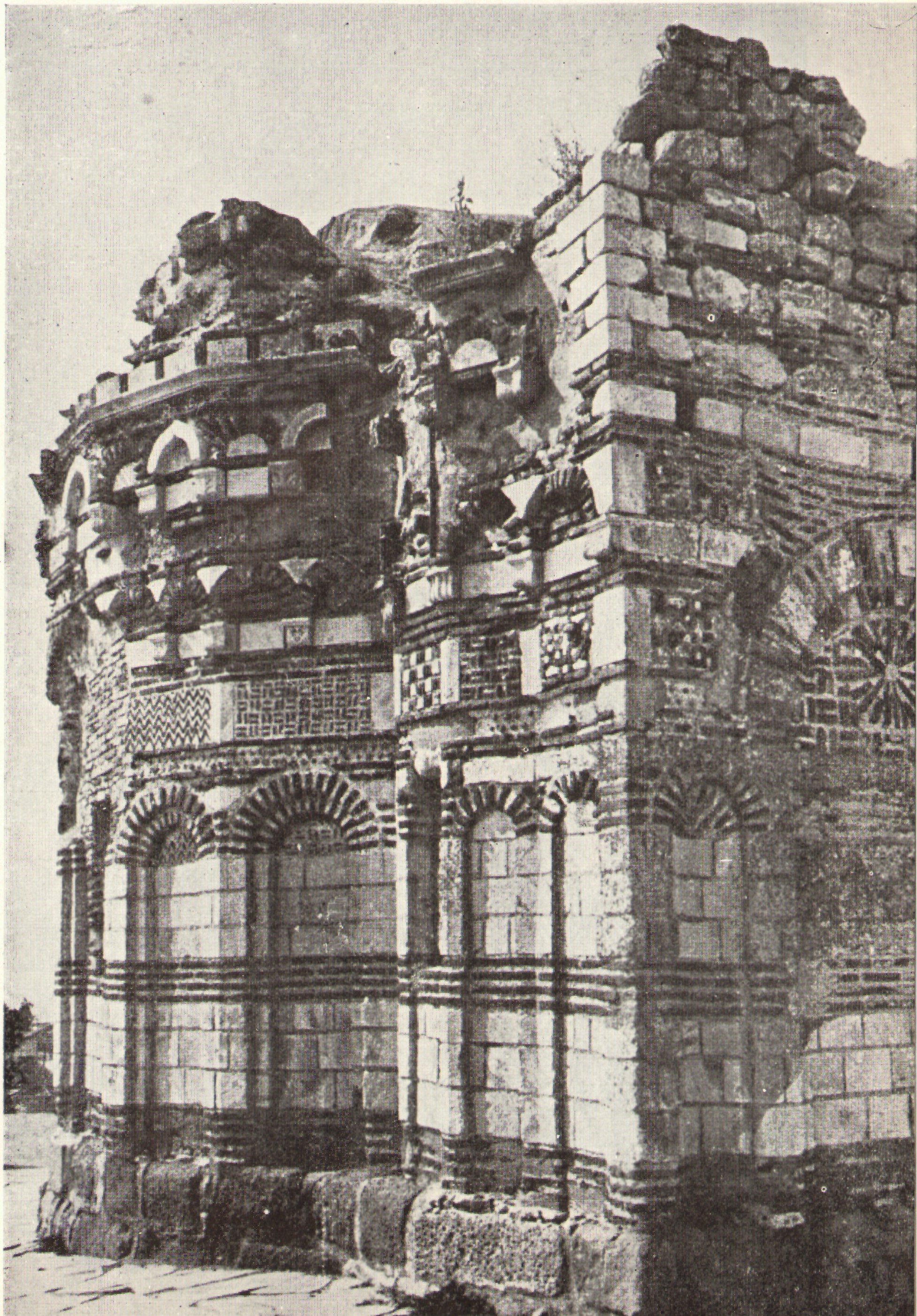


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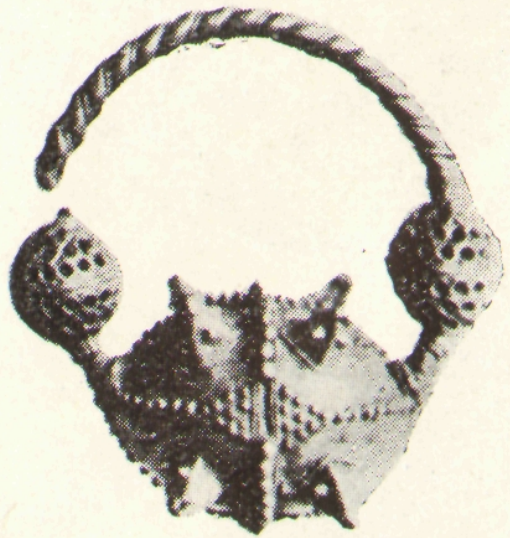
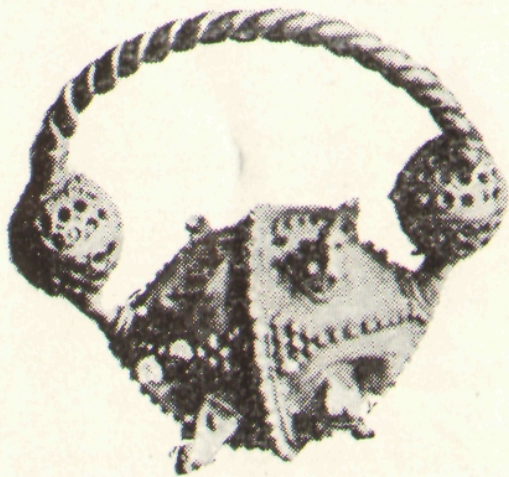
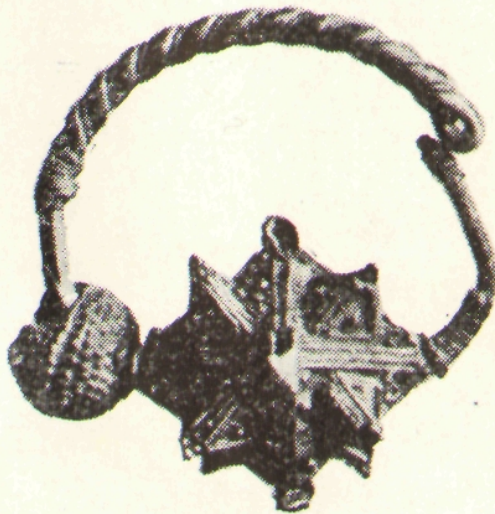
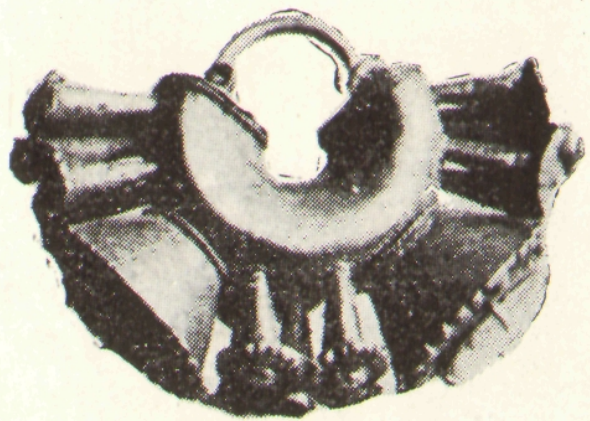
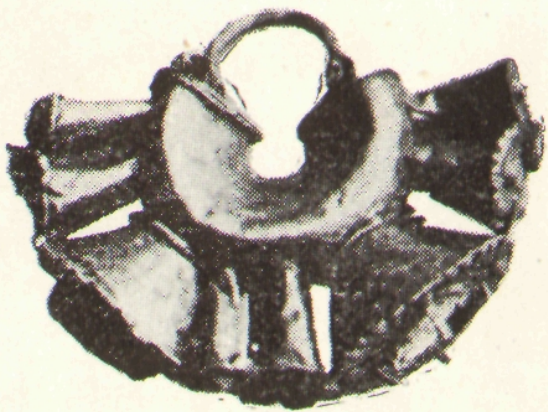












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